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Zur Bewusstseinslage
des heutigen abendländischen Menschen

Der Ausgangspunkt aller Überlegungen zur gegenwärtigen Lage des christlichen Glaubens und damit der römisch-katholischen Kirche muss die Bewusstseinslage des heutigen europäischen Menschen sein; denn diese wird bald die Bewusstseinslage der gesamten Menschheit sein. Deshalb ist von der heutigen Seelen- und Geisteslage jener Bevölkerungskreise auszugehen, die das öffentliche Bewusstsein prägen: Das sind jene Menschen, die den Geist der Schulen, Universitäten sowie Hochschulen und der Medien gestalten. Eine ‚Ortsbestimmung der Gegenwart' ist deshalb zunächst notwendig, wie sie seinerzeit Alexander Rüstow vorgenommen hat[1].

Will man die Bewusstseinslage des heutigen Menschen analysieren, so könnte man diese einseitig unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Fortschrittsdenkens als einen gegenüber früheren Bewusstseinszuständen erleuchteteren Bewusstseinszustand ansehen und so ihn von den früheren naiveren unterscheiden. Tatsächlich ist aber auch hier nach dem Prinzip des Orakels von Delphi ‚Erkenne dich selbst!' vorzugehen und zwar aufgrund der menschlichen reflektierten, also sich spiegelnden menschlichen Personalität, das heißt: Zwischen dem frühen mythischen oder magisch-religiösen Auffassen und Denken und dem heutigen profanen Denken besteht eine Spiegelung, wie sie auch zwischen dem mythischen Bilddenken und dem logischen Begriffsdenken vorliegt. Nicht um einen Dualismus geht es, sondern um eine Einheit in Zweiheit, das heißt: Der Logos oder das diskursive Denken hat das frühere religiöse Vorstellen und Denken in Bildern nicht überwunden und außer Kraft gesetzt, sondern auf eine abstraktere Stufe gestellt. Beide Möglichkeiten des Menschen, das mythisch-religiöse Denken, also das Denken in Archetypen und Symbolen einerseits und andererseits die begrifflich-diskursive Denkweise schließen einander nicht aus, sondern müssen in ein richtiges Verhältnis zueinander gesetzt werden[2]. Dabei

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1 A. Rüstow, Ortsbestimmung der Gegenwart. Eine universalgeschichtliche Kulturkritik, Bd. 1: Ursprung der Herrschaft (Erlenbach-Zürich 1950); Bd. 2: Weg der Freiheit (ebd. 1952); Bd. 3: Herrschaft oder Freiheit? (ebd. 1957). – Vgl. auch R. Guardini, das Ende der Neuzeit. Ein Versuch zur Orientierung (Basel 1950).

2 J. Hüllen, Art. Archetypos: Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie 1 (1971) 497-500; G. Isler, Art. Archetypus: Enzyklopädie des Märchens 1 (1977) 743-748. – G. Kurz, Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol ⁵(Göttingen 2004) 70-89. 95-97. 107-109 ohne Erwähnung von C. G. Jung, / M.-L. von Franz (Hrsg.), Der Mensch und seine Symbole (Olten 1968, Ndr. Ostfildern 2012); B. Braun, Kunstphilosophie und Ästhetik, Bd. 1-4 (Darmstadt 2019) Reg.: ‚Symbol'.

muss sich das ursprüngliche mythisch-religiöse Denken ebenso nach seiner Wahrheit befragen lassen wie das diskursive Denken.

Das neuzeitliche Denken hat seit dem 17. und 18. Jahrhundert die zuvor herrschenden Perspektiven antiken Denkens und christlichen Glaubens wachsend zu einem Metastandpunkt umgestaltet. Diese neue geistige Perspektive stellte die Antike ebenso wie den christlichen Glauben vor das Tribunal einer immer feiner differenzierten philologisch-historischen und religionsgeschichtlichen Kritik[3]. Diese Kritik wurde in den letzten Dezennien von einer kritischen Dekonstruktion alles Überlieferten und damit auch der Traditionen und der Institutionen überboten.

Die kritische Geschichtswissenschaft, unterstützt von der Philosophie Georg Wilhelm Hegels (1770–1831) als des Philosophen eines ‚werdenden Gottes‘, zog seit Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831) und Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) die gesamten Kulturen in einen Sog des Werdens und Vergehens[4]. Damit war ein Auflösungsprozess eingeleitet, der Welt und Mensch, Kosmos – Natur bzw. Schöpfung und Kultur nur mehr als einen einzigen Werdeprozess verstehen ließ. Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) beginnt sein Buch ‚Die Absolutheit des Christentums‘ mit den Worten: „Es darf als anerkannt gelten, dass die seit dem 18. Jahrhundert zu großen und beherrschenden Gestaltungen entwickelte moderne Welt einen eigenen Kulturtypus darstellt neben der Weltkultur der Antike und neben der Kultur der katholischen Kirche... Einer der wichtigsten Grundzüge dieser neueren Welt ist die Ausbildung einer restlos historischen Anschauung der menschlichen Dinge“[5]. Damit charakterisiert E. Troeltsch den Historismus, wobei er das Denken von Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) fortsetzt[6]. Im Gegensatz zu der Einseitigkeit der historistischen Betrachtung von Natur und Kultur, bei der nur die Werdestruktur in den Blick kommt, müssen in gleicher Weise Tradition, Typologie, Systematik und Symbolik beachtet werden und außerdem die rechtlichen und sittlichen Gesetze und Normen. Auf das sich Durchhaltende weisen auch die Begriffe Urphänomen (J. W. Goethe) und Archetypos (C. G. Jung [1875–1961]) hin. Beide gründen in der Seinsebene des echten gewachsenen Mythos, einer Seinsebene, die sachlich und zeitlich dem diskursiven Denken vorausliegt und mit Inspi-

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3 W. Speyer, Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum. Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung = Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 1, 2 (München 1971) Reg.: ‚Echtheitskritik‘; Ders., Italienische Humanisten als Kritiker der Echtheit antiker und christlicher Literatur = Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse 1993, Nr. 3. – H. R. Schlette, Zur Erforschung der Religionskritik: Kairos, N. F. 24 (1982) 67-86.

4 A. von Martin, Geistige Wegbereiter des deutschen Zusammenbruchs: Hegel: Hochland 39 (1946) 117-134, bes. 123: „Doch Gott selbst ‚entwickelt sich‘. Gott ist nicht mehr der, der im Anfang war, und der *ist* von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit; sondern auch Gott ist der immer Werdende, in ständigem Wandel begriffen bis ans Ende der Welt... Die Geschichte wird metaphysiziert, zugleich aber wird die Metaphysik historisiert. Der Pandynamismus reißt alles in seine Strudel hinein...“.

5 E. Troeltsch, Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte. Zwei Schriften zur Theologie ³(Tübingen 1929, Ndr. Kempten 2012).

6 E. Troeltsch, Der Historismus und seine Probleme = Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 3 (Tübingen 1922, Ndr. Darmstadt 2016); E. Heitsch, Überlieferung und Deutung. Philologische Überlegungen zum Traditionsproblem: Antike und Abendland 9 (1960) 19-38, bes. 24.

ration und Offenbarung, also mit der göttlichen Dimension, zusammenhängt[7]. Die „geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt", wie Goethe in ‚Urworte. Orphisch' im Blick auf die Personalität formuliert hat, betont die wesens- und seinshafte Dimension gegenüber der Werdedimension[8]. Letztlich ist sie dem einzelnen Menschen in seinem Personsein, das mit seiner Reflexion, dem Denken über das Denken, unmittelbar gegeben ist, gegenwärtig. Von dieser Position des Selbst ist als dem gründenden Fundament für alles Erkennen und Denken auszugehen.

Diese seinshafte Ebene des Mythisch-Archetypischen muss sich deshalb auch in den geschichtlichen Urkunden über den geschichtlich gewordenen Glauben, also vornehmlich in den vier kanonischen Evangelien, finden und ist notwendig mit der geglaubten Menschwerdung Gottes in Jesus Christus verknüpft[9].

Wenn alles in der Geschichte Erscheinende nur unter dem Werde-Aspekt betrachtet wird, dann ist auch Jesus von Nazaret, also das Zentrum des christlichen/kirchlichen Glaubens, nur eine geschichtliche Größe, die an eine bestimmte, in diesem Fall an die apokalyptisch-eschatologische, Weltstunde seiner frühjüdischen Umgebung gebunden ist und die mit dieser Weltstunde vor 2000 Jahren vergangen ist. Hier sei auf eine oft zitierte Bemerkung Albert Schweitzers hingewiesen: „Es ist der Leben-Jesu-Forschung merkwürdig ergangen. Sie zog aus, um den historischen Jesus zu finden und meinte, sie könnte ihn dann, wie er ist, als Lehrer und Heiland in unsere Zeit hineinstellen. Sie löste die Bande, mit denen er seit Jahrhunderten an den Felsen der Kirchenlehre gefesselt war und freute sich, als wieder Leben und Bewegung in die Gestalt kam und sie den historischen Jesus auf sich zukommen sah. Aber er blieb nicht stehen, sondern ging an unserer Zeit vorüber und kehrte in die seinige zurück. Das eben befremdete und erschreckte die Theologie der letzten Jahrzehnte, dass sie ihn mit allem Deuteln und aller Gewalttat in unserer Zeit nicht festhalten konnte, sondern ihn ziehen lassen musste. Er kehrte in die seinige zurück mit derselben Notwendigkeit, mit der das befreite Pendel sich in seine ursprüngliche Lage zurückbewegt"[10]. Diese Äußerung ist nicht ohne den Blickpunkt des Historismus zustande gekommen. Der Historismus ordnet alle Gestalten der Geschichte gleichmäßig ein. Er unterscheidet nicht zwischen Heilig und Profan, zwischen den ‚göttlichen Menschen' der Antike, den ‚Gottesmännern' des Alten Testamentes und den christlichen Heiligen auf der

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7 W. Speyer, Frühes Christentum im antiken Strahlungsfeld, Bd. 3 = Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 213 (Tübingen 2007) 75-88: ‚Die Offenbarungsübermittlung und ihre Formen als mythische und geschichtliche Anschauung'; Ders., Zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit, Zeit und Ewigkeit. Der Mensch als das Wesen des ‚Zwischen' = Salzburger Theologische Studien 51 (Innsbruck 2014) 133-163: ‚Der echte gewachsene Mythos in Bild und Wort als Offenbarung'; ferner vgl. R. Häussler, Tacitus und das historische Bewusstsein = Bibliothek der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, N. F. 2. Reihe <9> (Heidelberg 1965) 21-184: ‚Pfeil und Rad. Umrisse des abendländischen und antiken Geschichtsdenkens', bes. 24-48: ‚Geschichtsbewusstsein der Gegenwart' mit einer Kritik des Historismus.

8 Vgl. Goethes Gedichtzyklus ‚Gott und die Welt'; ebd. ‚Parabase'.

9 H. Schlier, Das Neue Testament und der Mythos: Hochland 48 (1956) 201-212; W. Speyer, Gesetz und Freiheit, Bedingtes und Unbedingtes. Zum Gegensatz in Mensch und Wirklichkeit = Salzburger Theologische Studien 56 (Innsbruck 2016) 212-234: ‚Vom Mythischen und Archetypischen in der christlichen Religion'.

10 A. Schweitzer, Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung[9] (Tübingen 1984, Ndr. der 2. Auflage ebd. 1913) 631 f.

einen Seite und andererseits den Männern und Frauen der Profangeschichte. Nicht alle Personen der Geschichte, die für die Menschheit eine außerordentliche Bedeutung besessen haben, gehen in ihrer Zeitbedingtheit gänzlich auf. Das trifft auf die Gründergestalten einzelner Weltreligionen zu, wie Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus aus Nazaret, Mani und Mohammed, trifft auch auf die Weisen der Menschheit und auf bestimmte Denker und Dichter zu, in deren Persönlichkeit und Lebenswerk sich eine übergeschichtliche Wirklichkeit offenbart. Diese höhere Wirklichkeit beginnt in der Seele jedes einzelnen Menschen. Wenn Max Scheler vom „Ewigen im Menschen" spricht, dann ist damit auf diese Wirklichkeit hingewiesen, der die eben Genannten in besonderer Weise in ihrer Persönlichkeit, in ihren Worten und Handlungen Ausdruck verliehen haben[11].

Mit dem Erstarken dieser neuen ausschließlich zeitlich fließenden und geschichtlichen Ansicht von Welt und Mensch verlor zunächst die durch das Christentum in den Hintergrund gerückte griechische und römische Weltsicht an Wert und an Einfluss. Mit der parallel zu dem neuen Geschichtsverständnis sich mehr und mehr entfaltenden Industrialisierung und Technisierung verblasste der christliche Glaube seit der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts immer mehr, vor allem in der städtischen Bevölkerung. Positivismus und Materialismus prägten seit der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhundert wachsend das heute die ganze Menschheit beherrschende europäische Denken. An die Stelle der kirchlich gebundenen Religiosität traten Atheismus und Agnostizismus, aber auch der Religionsersatz in Form eines neuen ‚Evangeliums der Arbeit und der Familie', sodann der Religionsersatz einer gleichsam politischen Religion, nämlich der Glaube an die auserwählte eigene Nation und schließlich der Glaube an eine Bildungs- und Kunstreligion[12]. Da das Denken untrennbar mit dem seelischen Erleben und Empfinden verbunden ist, stellten sich durch diese Vereinseitigung negative seelische Folgen ein. Der neu aufkommende Menschentypos verarmte, da der Sinn für das in allen Erscheinungen bemerkbare Geheimnisvolle, das Tor für das Numinose, verlorenging[13].

Wenn nach dem Winter, der Zeit eines scheinbaren Todes und eines scheinbaren Stillstandes der Lebenskräfte, die Erde aus ihrem Schoß die Fülle der Blätter und Blumen entlässt, dann wiederholt sich gleichsam das erste Wunder, das Hervortreten der Erscheinungswelt. Dieses Wunder besteht darin, dass Dunkel und Finsternis, Verschlossenes und Geheimes gleichsam als der Urschoß die Fülle der lichten Erscheinungen aus sich entlassen. Wie das Dunkel der Erde auf das Licht der Sonne angewiesen ist, so die auf der

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11 M. Scheler, Vom Ewigen im Menschen = Ders., Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 5 (Bern 1954).

12 Th. Nipperdey, Religion im Umbruch. Deutschland 1870–1918 (München 1988) 124-153: ‚Die Unkirchlichen und die Religion. 1. Atheismus; 2. Säkularer Glaube; 3. Außerchristliche Religiosität'.

13 R. Otto, Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen (München 1917, zahlreiche Nachdrucke, zuletzt München 1991). – C. Colpe (Hrsg.), Die Diskussion um das ‚Heilige' = WdF 305 (Darmstadt 1977); A. Dihle, Art. Heilig: RAC 14 (1988) 1-63; A. Paus, Art. Heilig, das Heilige I. Religionswissenschaftlich: LThK 43 (1995) 1267 f.; W. Gantke, Art. Heilig, das Heilige II. Religionsphilosophisch: ebd. 1268-1271; Th. A. Idinopulos / E. A. Yonan (Hrsg.), The Sacred and its Scholars = Studies in the History of Religion 73 (Leiden 1996). – Ferner vgl. D. Kamper / Ch. Wulf (Hrsg.), Das Heilige. Seine Spur in der Moderne (Frankfurt a. M. 1987).

Erde erscheinenden Pflanzen und Tiere und auch der Mensch auf das Licht der Sonne und in der Nacht auf das Licht des Mondes und der Sterne. Lichtwerdung heißt so der Grundakkord, der die Harmonien der Erscheinungswelt bestimmt. Dies gilt für die unbewusst lebende Natur, dies gilt für den bewusst lebenden Menschen. Aus dem Vorbewussten steigen wie Gewächse die Fülle der Gedanken und die diese klanglich ausdrückenden Gestalten der verschiedenen Sprachen. So ist das Nichtgewusste, das Nichtgestaltete in Stoff und Geist zeitlich die Voraussetzung für die Lichtwerdung der Erscheinungen und der Gedanken. Deshalb beginnen die aus der Seele aufsteigenden Urmythen vom Werden der Welt und des Menschen, die Kosmo- und Anthropogonien, mit diesem Dunkel oder scheinbarem Nichts, das vor der Lichtwerdung, vor dem Werden der Gestalt und der Fülle der Gestalten, liegt. Damit wird auf das Geheime als auf den ‚Urschoß‘ hingedeutet, aus dem das Wirklichkeitsganze hervorgegangen ist. Aus diesem Geheimen, das vor dem Stoff und vor dem uns zugänglichen Geist als das schlechthin Unbekannte, das als Bedingung allem uns sinnenhaft und geistig Zugänglichen vorausliegt, kommt alles und in dieses fällt alles wieder zurück. Das Geheime, das Urdunkel oder der Urschoß ist andererseits der Rahmen, in dem das Ganze dieser Erscheinungswelt ruht und sich bewegt. Mit diesem Geheimen, welches das Nachdenken über das Ganze nur zu berühren vermag, in dem wir und gegenüber dem wir zugleich stehen, ist damit nicht das bodenlose Nichts gemeint, sondern das eigentliche All. Als dessen Widerschein hat diese mehr in Ambivalenz als in Widerspruch stehende räumlich-zeitlich-dingliche Wirklichkeit, also die Realität von Werden und Vergehen, von Leben und Tod, zu gelten.

Hatte der positive Zweig der Romantik als Reaktion auf die nur mehr kritisch eingestellte philosophisch-wissenschaftlichen Aufklärung – man denke an Lessing! – das Tor in das Jenseits noch offen gelassen –, so schlugen Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872), Karl Marx (1818–1883) und Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) dieses Tor vollends zu. Von einem offenen oder geöffneten Himmel, von einem Durchscheinen des Jenseitig-Göttlichen im Diesseitigen, und zwar in den Erscheinungen des Himmels und der Erde, aber auch im Menschen, war keine Rede mehr. Wohl als erste haben die französischen Dichter Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891) und Stephane Mallarmé (1842–1898) das Göttlich-Jenseitige und das Erlösend-Christliche zugunsten des Nihilistisch-Absurden verleugnet[14]. Grundlegend in dieser Reihe steht sodann Friedrich Nietzsches, der in seiner ‚Fröhlichen Wissenschaft‘ durch die Rede des ‚tollen Menschen‘ von der Tötung Gottes spricht. Bereits deutsche Romantiker haben den Nihilismus vorbereitet, wie der anonyme Verfasser des Buches ‚Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura‘[15]. In diesem Zusam-

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14 H. Friedrich, Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik. Von Baudelaire bis zur Gegenwart (Hamburg 1956) 72-106: ‚Mallarmé‘, bes. 87 f.: ‚Das Nichts und die Form‘ und 89 f. zu dessen „Mystik des Nichts", die der „leeren Transzendenz" bei Baudelaire und Rimbaud entspreche; E. Grassi, Der Tod Gottes. Zu einer These von Mallarmé: Das Altertum und jedes neue Gute. Festschrift W. Schadewaldt (Stuttgart 1970) 195-214.

15 Erstmals anonym erschienen in dem kleinen sächsischen Ort Penig bei Altenburg 1804, zahlreiche Nachdrucke, z. B. München 1947, dann Stuttgart 1969 (bibliophile Ausgabe von W. Blecher / R. Brinkmann); J. Schillemeit, Bonaventura. Der Verfasser der „Nachtwachen" (München 1973), der nicht Friedrich Gottlob Wetzel (1780–1819), sondern den Dramatiker August Klingemann (1777–1831) als Verfasser annimmt. –– Die

menhang gehört auch Jean Paul (1763–1825) mit seiner „Rede des toten Christus, vom Weltgebäude herab, dass kein Gott sei"[16]. In den Worten Nietzsches „bekundet sich", wie E. Benz bemerkt: „das Wissen, dass die mit der Renaissance und dem Humanismus einsetzende Entchristlichung des Menschenbildes ihren Schlusspunkt erreicht hat. Naturwissenschaft, Deszendenztheorie, Biologie haben den Menschen zum irdischen Lebewesen neben anderen gemacht; die Beziehungen zwischen Mensch und Gott sind systematisch abgebaut, der Mensch ist in seiner reinen Innerweltlichkeit erfasst, das Urbild vergessen. Was sich in Jahrhunderten, ohne es genau zu wissen, zerstört, das wird von Nietzsche im Gewiss des vollen dämonischen Bewusstseins dieser Zerstörung ausgesprochen: mit dem Bild Gottes ist Gott selbst, der ohne den Menschen ‚nicht ein Nu kann leben', getötet. Der Mensch schickt sich an, den Gottesthron zu besteigen, und dieser Totschlag, das größte Attentat der größten Revolution, erfüllt ihn mit dem eigentlich triumphalen Bewusstsein seines Übermenschentums, das durch keinen Gott mehr begrenzt wird und das sich am Bild keines Gottes mehr zu messen braucht. ‚Ist nicht die Größe dieser Tat zu groß für uns? Müssen wir nicht selbst zu Göttern werden?'"[17].

Die Rede vom Tode Gottes war gleichbedeutend mit der Rede von der Allmacht des Nichts und des Absurden und damit einer absoluten Bedrohung des Menschen. Atheismus und Nihilismus, geschlossene Diesseitigkeit und der Rückfall des Menschen auf sich selbst kennzeichnen das heutige Weltbild und damit das Erleben, Fühlen und Denken des europäischen Menschen.

Vor mehr als fünfzig Jahren begann Joseph Ratzinger seine Darlegung ‚Glaube und Zukunft' (München 1970) mit der Feststellung, dass der Philosoph und Soziologe Auguste Comte (1798–1857) die Entwicklung des menschlichen Bewusstseins in dem Dreischritt vom theologisch-fiktiven zum abstrakt-metaphysischen zum positiven Denken vollzogen habe. Dabei sei im Zuge der seelischen und geistigen Entwicklung die Gottesfrage zur überholten Frage geworden, die das aufgeklärte kritische Bewusstsein als inhaltslos hinter sich lasse. Heute teilen weiteste Kreise dieses von A. Comte entworfene Bild. Wörtlich bemerkt J. Ratzinger: „Die Gottesfrage findet keinen Ansatz im Denken mehr. Der Zusammenhang der Welt ist in sich geschlossen und die Hypothese Gott für ihr Verständnis nicht mehr nötig, um ein bekanntes Wort von <Pierre-Simon> Laplace <1749–1827> <zu Napoleon> aufzunehmen"[18].

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deutsche Romantik zeigt auch ein nihilistisches Gesicht: D. Arendt, ‚Der poetische Nihilismus' in der Romantik 1/2 (Tübingen 1972).

16 G. Bornkamm, Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum, Bd. 2 = Beiträge zur Evangelischen Theologie 28 (München 1959) 245-252.

17 E. Benz, Endzeiterwartung zwischen Ost und West. Studien zur christlichen Eschatologie = Sammlung Rombach, N. F. 20 (Freiburg i. Br. 1973) 245. – F. Nietzsche, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, 3. Buch 125: ‚Der tolle Mensch' (Chemnitz 1882) = G. Colli / M. Montinari (Hrsg.), Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 5. Abt., Bd. 2 ²(Berlin 1973) 158-160.

18 J. Ratzinger, Glaube und Zukunft (München 1970) 13-35: ‚Glauben und Wissen'. – Zu Auguste Comte R. Eucken, Zur Würdigung Comte's und des Positivismus: Philosophische Aufsätze. Festschrift E. Zeller (Leipzig 1887) 53-82; H. de Lubac, Die Tragödie des Humanismus ohne Gott. Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Comte und Dostojewskij als Prophet, dt. Übers. (Salzburg 1950).

Wie hieraus zu erkennen ist, besteht ein Zusammenhang zwischen der Krise, Gott zu erfahren und seine Allgegenwart anzuerkennen und der Krise des christlichen Glaubens und der Kirche. Mit der Renaissance beginnt der Abschied vom Christentum. Sie trägt ein Doppelgesicht: die an der Antike geschulte Klassizität und den Manierismus[19]. Der Manierismus trägt mit seiner Vorliebe für das Groteske, das Absurde, das Wahnsinnige, das Hässliche bis hin zum Satanischen Samen in sich, die zu den Kunstanschauungen der genannten französischen Dichter geführt haben, die ihrerseits auf Dichter und bildende Künstler des 20. Jahrhunderts eingewirkt haben. Seit der Renaissance und mehr noch seit der Aufklärung des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts und der fortschreitenden Industrialisierung und Technisierung, die im 18. Jahrhundert in England bereits begonnen hat, aber seit der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts rasant fortgeschritten ist, gehen der Verlust der Gotteserfahrung und der Niedergang des Gottesgedankens mit einem neuen Menschenbild, das zur absoluten Autonomie des Menschen führt, Hand in Hand[20]. Diese Verluste sind eingetreten, weil der Mensch mehr und mehr aus den Bedingungen, welche die Schöpfung oder – antik ausgedrückt – die Physis/Natura ihm stellt, mit Hilfe seines Verstandes herausgefallen ist. Geblendet von der ihm tatsächlich nur verliehenen, aber nicht selbst geschaffenen Verstandeskraft glaubt er, sich allein alles verdanken und die Natur / Schöpfung gänzlich seinem Willen unterwerfen zu können[21]. So begannen ihn zwei Gedanken zu beherrschen, der Gedanke seiner schrankenlosen Autonomie und der Gedanken seiner Subjektivität, seiner Ichhaftigkeit, seines Egozentrismus und seines Narzissmus[22]. Der Mensch vergaß seine Rolle, die er zusammen mit dem Planeten Erde teilt, und vermeint, selbst

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19 W. Hofmann, Zauber der Medusa. Europäische Manierismen. Ausstellungskatalog, 3. April – 12. Juli 1987, Wiener Künstlerhaus (Wien 1987); Ders., Einträchtige Zwietracht: ebd. 13-21. Diese Charakterisierung des Manierismus kann nicht zutreffen, da der Manierismus das Abgründige und Dunkle, das mit dem Satanischen in Verbindung steht, gegenüber dem positiven Pol eindeutig bevorzugt. Man vergleiche die Kapitel des Katalogs: ‚Der bannende Blick‘, ‚Triumph des Herrschers‘, ‚Triumph der Venus‘, ‚Aufrührer und Gewalttäter‘, ‚Verwandlungen der Venus‘, ‚Die letzten Dinge‘, ‚Ruhm der Künste‘, „herrlich schen kunststuckh“‘, ‚Irrgärten und Ruinen‘, ‚Capricci und Häuser der Laune‘, ‚Nachtgedanken‘, ‚Schreckenshäupter‘, ‚Die nackte Wahrheit‘, ‚Anatomien der Begierde‘, „Permanenter Formweg“‘, ‚Kämpfe und Spiele der verwandelten Götter‘, „Alle Klaviaturen sind legitim“‘, ‚Kunstwerke sind Ansichtssache‘, „Komplexität und Widerspruch“‘. Wiewohl von den 19 Kapiteln das 6. Kapitel ‚Die letzten Dinge‘ heißt und wiewohl christliche Bildthemen in manieristischer Formgestalt im Katalog begegnen, zeigt die im Katalog aufgewiesene Erscheinung des Manierismus in der bildenden Kunst, wie sehr Christliches bereits aus dem Zusammenhang von Karfreitag und Ostern gerissen ist. Von christlicher Erlösung ist im Manierismus nicht die Rede. Hier bestehen Zusammenhänge, wie sie Friedrich a. O. (s. o. Anm. 14) 33-35: ‚Ruinöses Christentum‘ für Baudelaire festgestellt hat. Dazu gehört bei Baudelaire ‚Die Ästhetik des Hässlichen‘, ‚Die Leere der Idealität‘, das ‚Zerlegen und Deformieren‘ (Friedrich a. O. 32-36. 41 f.) und eine gewisse Verbindung von Positivem und Negativem, wobei das Negative aber das Übergewicht hat, wie der Titel seiner berühmten ‚Fleurs du mal‘ beweist. Diese nennt er „misstönendes Erzeugnis der Musen der Endzeit“ (Friedrich a. O. 31 f.). Die hier gemeinte ‚Endzeit‘ ist aber nicht die Zeit der christlichen Erwartung des ‚Reiches Gottes‘, sondern die vom Menschen über sich selbst verhängte Endzeit.

20 W. M. Neidl, Das Verständnis des Menschen in der abendländischen Tradition: Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie 101 (1979) 316-328, bes. 323-326: ‚Das Menschenbild der Renaissance und der Neuzeit‘.

21 Zur Bewusstseinsgeschichte B. Kilga, Der Mensch im Bewusstseinswandel ²(Wien 1986); Ders., Autonomie und Glaube. Betrachtungen zum Wandel des Bewusstseins = Im Kontext 29 (Anif–Salzburg 2008).

22 Ch. Lasch, Das Zeitalter des Narzissmus (München 1980, Ndr. Hamburg 1995).

Sonne zu sein[23]. Die außerordentlichen Erfolge der Technik auf vielen Gebieten des täglichen Lebens, nicht zuletzt auf dem der Medizin, führten zu der falschen Hoffnung, am Ende nicht nur alle Krankheiten besiegen zu können, sondern sogar den Tod. Was die Religionen, vor allem der christliche Glaube, als etwas Jenseitiges verkündet hatten, glauben seit Karl Marx viele Menschen selbst hier auf Erden schaffen zu können. Damit aber ist die Spannung zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits, zwischen Profanem und Heiligem, zwischen Leib und Seele, zwischen Mensch und Gott aufgehoben. Bereits J. W. Goethes Gedichte ‚Prometheus‘ und ‚Vanitas! vanitatum vanitas!‘ mit dem Anfang: „Ich hab mein Sach auf Nichts gestellt, juche!“ sowie Verse seines ‚Fausts‘, die sein Held am Lebensende spricht, weisen in die Richtung einer ausschließlichen Diesseitigkeit und Ichhaftigkeit[24].

Aus dem Verdrängen des Jenseitigen aus dem Diesseitigen folgte der Verlust der Schöpfung bzw. der Natur in ihrer Aussage- und Wirkkraft, die in ihren Gegensätzen und Steigerungen den Menschen ganzheitlich anspricht. Gott hat die Natur geschaffen und offenbart sich in ihr, wie es Paulus im Römerbrief anspricht[25]. Darauf verweist die Meta-

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23 Lateinisch *homo* leitet sich von *humus* her; O. Brink, Art. homo: Thesaurus linguae Latinae 6, 3 (1936/42) 2871, 50-63. Entsprechend geht das hebräische Wort ’adām, Mensch, auf ’adāmā, Erdboden, Erde zurück; E. Haag, Art. Adam: Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche 1 ³(1993) 133 f. Gewiss ist der Mensch mehr als ‚Erde‘; denn er ist das höchste von Gott beseelte Geschöpf der Erde. Deshalb ist er metaphorisch als Kind von Erde und Himmel zu bezeichnen; Speyer, Gesetz und Freiheit a. O (s. o. Anm. 9) 25-65: ‚Was verstand die Antike unter Freiheit? Begriff und Realität der Freiheit in der griechischen und römischen Antike‘, bes. 63-65: ‚Die Unfreiheit der Seele im Körper nach orphischer, pythagoreischer und platonischer Auffassung‘.

24 Faust, 2. Teil, 5. Akt, Mitternacht, Vers 11433-11452:

> Ich bin nur durch die Welt gerannt;
> Ein jed′ Gelüst ergriff ich bei den Haaren,
> Was nicht genügte, ließ ich fahren,
> Was mir entwischte, ließ ich ziehn.
> Ich habe nur begehrt und nur vollbracht
> Und abermals gewünscht und so mit Macht
> Mein Leben durchgestürmt;
> Erst groß und mächtig
> Nun aber geht es weise, geht bedächtig
> Der Erdenkreis ist mir genug bekannt,
> Nach drüben ist die Aussicht uns verrannt;
> Tor, wer dorthin die Augen blinzelnd richtet
> Sich über Wolken seinesgleichen dichtet!
> Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um;
> Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm.
> Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen!
> Was er erkennt, läßt sich ergreifen
> Er wandle so den Erdentag entlang;
> Wenn Geister spuken, geh’ er seinen Gang,
> Im Weiterschreiten find’ er Qual und Glück,
> Er, unbefriedigt jeden Augenblick!

25 Rom. 1, 19 f.: „Ist doch, was sich von Gott erkennen lässt, in ihnen [den Menschen] offenbar; Gott selbst hat es ihnen kundgetan. Denn sein unsichtbares Wesen, seine ewige Macht und Göttlichkeit sind seit Erschaffung der Welt an seinen Werken durch die Vernunft zu erkennen…“; vgl. Sapientia 13, 1-9; Ecclesiasticus 17, 3; Act. 17, 24-28.

pher vom ‚Buch der Natur‘ als dem zweiten Buch der Offenbarung neben der Bibel[26].

Diesen Verlust haben wachsende Verstädterung, Zersiedelung der Landschaft sowie die Überformung fast aller Lebensbereiche durch Technik und Medien verursacht. Damit ist der Verfall einer Herzens- und Seelenbildung eingeleitet, welche in früheren Jahrhunderten die in vielen Dichtungen und Werken der bildenden Kunst, der Architektur und der Musik bewahrte und ausgedrückte Gotteserfahrung gestaltet hat. Deshalb ist der Mensch heute dem göttlichen Geheimnis als dem Urgrund und Fundament des Universums weithin entfremdet. Berg, Meer und Luft, Wald und Quell, See und Fluss sind weltweit nur noch in Ausnahmefällen vom modernen Zweckdenken mit seiner technisch gestützten und wirtschaftlich genutzten Ausbeutung unberührt geblieben und in ihrer ursprünglichen Reinheit und Heiligkeit erlebbar. Der Rückzug des Heiligen als des zentralen Wesensmerkmals der Natur, die als Schöpfung des transzendenten und immanenten Gottes zu verstehen ist, scheint infolge von deren täglich wachsender Verplanung sowie Ausbeutung und der nur noch auf diesseitige Zwecke gerichteten Technisierung der Erde und des uns zugänglichen Weltraumes unwiderruflich zu sein. St. Mallarmés und F. Nietzsches Sprechen vom „Tode Gottes“ gehen bemerkenswerterweise zeitlich mit der explodierenden Industrialisierung und Technisierung der Erde parallel.

Der Wandel von einem Erfahren, welches das Heilige in der Welt wahrzunehmen vermochte, zu einem Erfahren, welches nur noch Informationen, also oft auch vordergründige und rein immanente Mitteilungen, aufzunehmen vermag, hat in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts begonnen. Der Naturalismus in der Kunst jener Zeit und die zugleich aufkommende Fotografie beleuchten diese neue Bewusstseinslage. Wie anders konnten noch die Landschaftsmaler vom späten 16. bis in das frühe 19. Jahrhundert und die Dichter jener Epoche die geheimnisvollen Stimmen der Natur vernehmen und vermitteln! Diesen Erfahrungswandel haben weniger einzelne Dichter und Denker des 19. Jahrhunderts hervorgerufen, als ein allgemeines Denken und Handeln, das weithin egoistischen Zwecken und Absichten dienen wollte und dienen will. Sehr bald begannen die immer vielfältiger werdenden technischen, insbesondere elektronischen, Medien ein Eigenleben zu entfalten und bestimmen so täglich mehr das seelische und das geistige Leben der Gegenwart in Europa und in den anderen Kulturkreisen. Damit besteht die Gefahr jener Wirkung, wie sie Goethes Gedicht ‚Der Zauberlehrling‘ beschrieben hat.

Je mehr wir uns der Gegenwart nähern, desto mehr suchen manche, das Irdische zu vergöttlichen oder, wie die oben genannten Dichter und Denker, es im Nichts als dem Absurden oder über dem Nichts ausgespannt zu sehen. Diese Bedrohung durch das Nichts, von der bereits einzelne Romantiker zeugen, die dann F. M. Dostojewski und F. Nietzsche in verschiedenen Anläufen beschworen haben, kann heute nicht mehr durch das Kos-

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26 Tertullian, de corona 6, 1 (CCL 1, 1046*): quaerens igitur dei legem habes communem istam in publico mundi, in naturalibus tabulis*; Evagrius Ponticus, practica 92 (SC 171, 694); E. R. Curtius, Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter ²(Bern, München 1954, Ndr. Tübingen 1993) 323-329: ‚Das Buch der Natur‘; F. Ohly, Ausgewählte und neue Schriften zur Literaturgeschichte und zur Bedeutungsforschung (Stuttgart 1995) 727-843: ‚Zum Buch der Natur‘; K. Huizing, Buch der Natur / Buch der Schrift: Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart 14 (1998) 1812 f. – H. Blumenberg, Die Lesbarkeit der Welt (Frankfurt a. M. 1979).

mosverständnis der Menschen der Antike gebannt werden. Gegenüber der die Antike bestimmenden Vorstellung einer ‚Ewigen Wiederkehr des Gleichen‘ ist das moderne Denken und Vorstellen infolge der Profanierung der Heilsgeschichte, wie sie das Alte und Neue Testament aussprechen, von einer innerweltlichen Linearität charakterisiert. Diese Linearität bestimmt das europäische Denken seit dem Sieg des Christentums, also seit Kaiser Konstantin. Sie führt entweder in das Reich Gottes oder in das Reich des Gottesfeindlichen[27]. Zu sehr erscheint die Welt des Menschen in seine eigene Geschichte eingespannt zu sein.

Beendet seien diese Überlegungen mit einem Gedanken von C. G. Jung: „Die Gestalt des Logos Christus hat im Menschen die *anima rationalis* auf eine Bedeutungshöhe gehoben, die unbedenklich ist, solange sie über sich den κύριος, den Herrn der Geister, weiß und ihm unterworfen ist. Die ‚Vernunft‘ hat sich aber befreit und sich wortwörtlich zur Herrin aufgeworfen und thronte als *Déesse Raison* seinerzeit in Notre-Dame, als ein Vorzeichen künftiger Ereignisse. Unser Bewusstsein ist nicht mehr eingefangen im heiligen Temenos extramundaner und eschatologischer Bilder. Es hat sich daraus befreien können, vermöge einer Kraft, die ihm nicht von oben zuströmte, nicht vermöge eines *lumen de lumine*, sondern vermöge eines ungeheuren Anstoßes der Dunkelheit, deren Macht sich steigerte, in dem Maße als das Bewusstsein, sich von der Dunkelheit lösend, ins Licht emporstieg“[28].

Als Alternative bleibt nur der Glaube an den Schöpfer-, Erhalter- und Erlösergott und der Glaube an den Menschen als an das gottverwandte und deshalb auch für Gott geöffnete Wesen, soll der Mensch nicht im Abgrund seiner selbstverschuldeten Sinnleere versinken.

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27 W. Speyer, Art. Gottesfeind: RAC 11 (1981) 996-1043, bes. 1030-1034: ‚Der dämonische Gottesfeind‘; zur Bestrafung des dämonischen Gottesfeindes vgl. P. van Imschoot / Ch. Hornung, Art. Leviathan: RAC 22 (2008) 1245-1251, bes. 1246 f.: ‚Altes Testament‘; H. Vorgrimler, Geschichte der Hölle ²(München 1994), dessen Grundtendenz, nämlich die Destruktion der Hölle, mit der jüdischen und christlichen Offenbarung nicht übereinstimmt.

28 C. G. Jung, Studien über alchemistische Vorstellungen = Gesammelte Werke 13 (Olten 1978) 211-269, bes. 262 f.: ‚Der Geist Mercurius‘; ferner vgl. W. Rüegg, Die humanistische Unterwanderung der Universität: Antike und Abendland 38 (1992) 107-123, bes. 122.

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Clarification of the meaning of doctor in New Testament through the example of St. Luke

Abstract: This paper develops the meaning of a *doctor* in the wing of the Christian tradition, by starting the thesis from the best and first known physician in the New Testament: St. Luke. Then the premise he was even in a doctor is questioned. However, the whole paper continues to follow the symbolism St. Luke indubitably has not only as one of the Evangelists, but parallelly as a physician, so it then questions what such an expertise would mean when one of the establishing figures is attached to a particular profession. Medical effort is then connected to the notion of *Christus medicus* as a primary healer. From that point on, a question of the miraculous healing and its effect on human approach to God emerges. This problem occurs when freedom as a central to the acceptance of God's deeds is installed. In this case, I discuss it on the grounds of a passage from *The Grand Inquisitior.* Finally, the problem of freedom in the multifaceted context of healing is to be circled in the discussion about the problematic positions both doctors and patients encounter, and ultimately medicine itself.

Key words: St. Luke, physician, healing, freedom, Christus medicus, The Grand Inquisitor

Introduction

That Christianity has brought authentic and substantial novelties reconstructing the foundation of the worldview for those who embrace it, is a common claim. At the same time, in order to grasp the extent of that novelty, it is not enough to accept this statement. One should look into all the lateral complexities which have thus emerged. In that domain and on this occasion, I hold that a good thing to do is to revise the knowledge we have or speculate upon, when it comes to St. Apostle Luke. This can prove to be quite interesting, since the metaphor of *The Beloved Physician,* becoming prominent from the Col.4:14, on one hand follows the Luke's name immediately, and on the other faces disputation and so forms two intellectual tendencies. Both of them hail from the linguistical analyses of the language used in the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles (i.e. Luke-Acts). There, the first finds support for claiming Luke's medical background, and the second contends such thing cannot be held conclusively.

In the late 19th and the beginning of 20th century, this topic was among those which sparked further interest in the domain of biblical studies. Perhaps the most famous authors

from the period who wrote extensively on St. Luke are Adolf von Harnack, William Kirk Hobart, and William Mitchell Ramsey. Generally, with the background in theology, also in archaeology, Ramsey gave the credibility to the three as the sources for further linguistic, literary, and historiographical study, and they remain relevant points of orientation[1] to this day. In order to see the type of argumentation following in the lines of research of the history of language, I will start with a selected variety of phrases with some of the words Hobart finds the most specific for Luke's style.[2]

Traces of Luke's linguistic footsteps

Perhaps it is the most appropriate to begin with the examples of the whole parables explicit in their account of some sort of healing. Coming among the most notable in both virtuous bearing and medical aid is the parable of *The good Samaritan* (Lk. 10:33,34). There is a common theme we could encounter in Hippocrates, Galen and antiquity, how wounds are to be treated with wine and oil.[3] These were used due to the antiseptic features of alcohol in wine, while oil was deemed to close the wound by creating a nice coating. *Hēmithanḗs* in the meaning of "half dead" is contested to be one such word, found in Galen.[4] Here, two more words stand out as the ones Hobart says are peculiar for St. Luke. The first one being *katadéein* ("binding up wounds and ulcers") is commonly used in Hippocrates and Galen, as well as in Luke. The second one, *traûma*, in its expected meaning of "wound", is indeed used once only in The New Testament, and that is in Luke 10:34. As Hobart points out, as well as dictionary compilations, *plēgḗ* in the general meaning of wound is used mostly. It holds meanings from "plague", to "public calamity", and most commonly "blow/strike".[5] These differences in meaning, especially when they range from physical to metaphorical domain, and mostly when they stand for both meanings at the same time, are thus important to stress. *Plēgḗ* stems from the verb *plēssō,* quite interestingly put in Rev.8:12[6]. Following in the line of root words, even more elasticity is found in the verb *thrauō,* throught the perfect passive participle form *tethrausménous* in Lk.4:18.[7] In this sort of examination, we can portray a broader picture and acquire both the sense for the language used in general, as well as peculiarities asserted for some authors as St. Luke.

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1 Since they faced many serious opponents, I am not implying their words should be taken without discussion. What I am trying to point at here is that in the examination of St.Luke the three remain one of the most prominent pillars which should not be avoided at least for the start of an analysis, and perhaps more.

2 William Kirk Hobart, *Medical Language of St. Luke,* Dublin University Press series, 1882.

3 *Ibid,* p.26

4 "[…]he may himself attended in his professional practice on travellers a similar case, for we find from a passage in Galen that it was not unusual for persons when seized with illness on a journey to take refuge in inns.", *Ibid,* p.27

5 Blue letter Bible: < https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4127&t=KJV> accessed on: 22.6.2020.

6 "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars…"

7 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor…" Perhaps in the English version does not convey the meaning as clearly. In Serbia, this part comes as (in my own translation): "to heal the contrite in heart" („da iscjeli skrušene u srcu").

The second parable found in Lk.4:37-39 depicts healing Simon's (Peter) mother-in-law. She was suffering from "high fever", *puretôi megálōi*. In these words, this recording is found only in Luke. In Mk.1:30, *katékeito puréssousa,* or "she laid in fever" is found, while in Mt.8:14 "she is shaken by fever", *kaì puréssousan,* is written. This could indicate Luke's profession, due to the more precise terminology when it comes to the variety of illnesses and diseases is found in his writing style. Another thing is something found in Galen, and that concerns *mégas* and *mikrós* which used to be common adjectives for fever distinction.[8] Hobart mentions another detail perhaps worth noticing, and that is the method of treatment Luke notes: "and he rebuked the fever, and it left her", which is in the case of Matthew and Mark recorded in the form of a statement that Christ touched her hand.

Another parable is in the 5th chapter of Luke (Lk.5:12-15), and it is one of those with a man with leprosy. Hobart compares this single case with the one in the 17th chapter (Lk.17:12-19) where multiple sick of leprosy are healed. The main phrase is *anếr plếrēs lépras,* where again comparison with Matthew (Mt.8:2) and Mark (Mk.1:40) comes. Both the former *idoù lepròs* and the latter *pròs autòn lepròs* state that a leper approached. This could be an interesting point, with or without the comparison with the previous parable, since more specific terminology indeed can demonstrate a language pattern which can then mean something, especially for authors like Hobart, Harnack and Ramsey, who base their claims for Luke's profession and thus his comportment not only towards illness, but how that illness was treated. In that sense, *Christus medicus* opens as a clearer metaphor to understand.

Continuing with examples, I would first point out to a couple of eye-catching reflections. Luke 8:27 is distinguished as the only verse in the entire New Testament which makes connection between a sort of a lunacy and nudity. More precisely, a man who is said to be demon-possessed walks naked and lives in tombs. In the same chapter, a tale of a woman with blood issue can be viewed as characteristic in language, since the form *éstē* from the verb *hístēmi* is in this context something expected in the ancient Greek medical terminology for the "stoppage of bodily discharges"[9]. Interestingly enough, the same happens with quite a common word *therapeía* that is uniquely used by St.Luke only in the following verse: "And people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need *of healing*."[10] (Lk.9:11) Something similar happens also in Lk.6:19: "And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and *healed* them all."[11] Hobart accentuates multiple times the verb *iáomai,* in this verse found in the form *iāto.* This is so due to the fact that the verb used to be employed by physicians quite frequently in the meaning of "healing", and thus renders precision of meaning. Additionally, Hobart states that out of its use of 28 times in the New Testament, St.Luke used it 17.[12] Practically the same line of thought

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8 William Kirk Hobart, *Medical Language of St. Luke,* Dublin University Press series, 1882., p.4
9 *Ibid,* p.15
10 *Ibid,* p.16; Another mention is in Rev.12:2. This was the usual terminology for medical writers.
11 *Ibid,* p.8
12 *Ibid,* p.9

should be observed in the parable of Malchus' ear (Lk.22:50-51): other Evangelists tell us the same story of ear cutting, yet Luke is the sole author who mentions *healing* as well.[13]

However, when dealing with different parables in the authorship of the Saint, one should not neglect the Acts of the Apostles. A subtle link Hobart finds between the Gospel of St. Luke and writings in the Acts is in the story of Tabitha who rises from the dead by *sitting up.* The verb here is *anekáthisen.* "The use of this word in both places – of the Widow's son in Nain in the Gospel, and Tabitha here – points to the identity of authorship of the Gospel and Acts of the Apostles, as well to the hand of a physician as author. [...] The circumstantial details of the gradual recovery of Tabitha – opened her eyes – sat up – he gave her his hand and lifted her up – are quite in the style of medical description."[14]

In the Acts 10:10[15], we find St. Peter praying, and then getting hungry, when it happens so that he falls in *trance. Ékstasis* is used here to depict the trance, quite familiarly. And yet, the medical sense of it is again found only in Luke. In St. Mark there is a mention of the same word, but in the meaning of "wonder" and "amazement". Nevertheless, in Hippocrates and Galen, it can be found as well, which then supports the line of its medical usage.[16]

After the many examples one can mention on the sole behalf of St. Luke, he should also be placed in the context with the other Evangelists, at least to the extent befitting the topic. In that context we should shed light on the relationship of St. Luke and St. Paul. Indeed, it seems that an instant tacit question is opened on that occasion, having in mind the long exegetic endeavours of scholars trying to discern the autor(s) of the Acts through centuries. There are, generally speaking, two main lines of thought. The traditional one claims St. Luke to be the author, while the opposing one assumes an unknown author, who was not perhaps even an eyewitness to the events in the Acts, but possessed certain memoirs and recordings of the meetings. What both lines seem to agree upon is the difference between St. Paul's style and theology and that of the writer of the Acts.

Nonetheless, for the time being we should continue following the line of thought presented so far in order to see the setting of that interpretation to the greater extent. If Luke indeed is the author behind the majority of the Acts, we can see he enjoyed a special type of Paul's trust, which was not only due to their missionary work, but also due to the Luke's medical expertise. As we presume firmly so far, the two met three times. The first time St. Luke is ever encountered in history is in the Acts 16:8. At that time St. Paul leaves Galatia in the inability to preach the Holy Spirit imposed upon him, and comes to Troas. There, he meets Luke, the one he famously calls in Col.4:14: "the beloved physician".[17] Their connec-

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13 *Ibid,* p.26; "In its character it was of such a nature as would impress itself on the mind of a physician; as it was unique among our Lord's acts of healing, and St. Luke in his medical practice had never seen the restoration of an amputated member of the body."

14 *Ibid,* p.41

15 Cf. Acts 11:5, 22:17.

16 *Ibid.* p.41

17 "When, therefore, St. Paul was suffering from this illness, or its effects, in Galatia, he may have communicated with St. Luke, and expressed a wish to meet him personally at Troas on account of the state of his health. On this occasion St. Luke's medical services, if needed, were required no further than Philippi, for on St. Paul's

tion is more continuous on St. Paul's second and third missionary journeys. In some time before the former, St. Paul talks about the trouble he and Timothy encountered in Asia, "far beyond their powers to endure" (2 Cor.1:8). Due to the circumstances of his missionary work, as well as his illness, Hobart suggests: "Taking all circumstances into account, it cannot well be regarded as an improbable or arbitrary assumption that one at least of the Apostle's objects in this visit to Philippi was to have the benefit of the 'beloved physician's advice' on the state of his health."[18] We must also have in mind here that Luke accompanied Paul to Jerusalem afterwards, and then on the voyage firstly to Caesarea and then to Rome. Hobart is here again following the account of the linguistic delicacies which are probable to support Luke's professional background. In the part reporting Paul's voyage to Rome, he mentions the phrase *epimeleías tucheîn* from the Acts 27:3, which is also found in the parable of the Samaritan, who "takes care of the one in need". However, I would like to stress more another word from the same verse highlighted by Hobart, and that is *philanthrṓpōs*. It is quite transparent in meaning, translated adverbially as "humanely" and directly in the meaning of the care the one who is in the position of a patient should receive. Hippocrates (De Décor.24) and Galen (Optim. Medic. 1,56) profess the same approach. Having in mind the broader frame of the formation of medicine, especially in the antiquity, this was important to accentuate and oppose to "mere gain" a physician could strive to get.[19]

In the more particular frame of the Acts and relationship between Luke and Paul, I would extract two more examples. Firstly, the moment of Saul's conversion to Paul in Acts 9:17-19. When Ananias entered his house and found Saul, he placed his hands upon Saul and passed the message from Christ, who sent Ananias to restore Saul's vision, lost, symbolically, three days before, when he was struck by divine light. Verse 18 thus says: "And immediately *something like scales* (*hōs lepídes*) *fell* (*apépesan*) from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized." Again, these phrases are found commonly in medical terminology of Hippocrates and Galen. "*Lepís* is a medical term for the particles or scaly substance thrown off from the body; it and *apopíptein* are met with in conjuction."[20] Another example from St. Paul's life I would like to mention concerns the bite of a viper after his shipwreck on Malta, in the Acts 28:3-6. "Viper" is signified as *ékhidna,* falling under the genus of "beasts" referred to as *thēríon.* This term was used to signify venomous animals, such are venomous snakes, and was also commonly used in medical referencing of the kind. In the verse 6, we see Paul shaking off the snake as if nothing happened, and expectance of the spectators that he *should have swollen* (*pímprasthai*) and *fallen dead* (*katapíptein*). The former was usually used to denote inflammatory wounds, while the latter stands for sudden collapsing, either from painful wounds, or something like epileptic shocks.[21]

departure from that city St. Luke was left behind, possibly in charge of the newly-founded Philippian Church.",
Ibid, p.293
18 Cf. *Ibid,* p.295
19 *Ibid,* p.296, 297
20 *Ibid.* p.38, 39
21 *Ibid,* p. 50, 51

What *if…*

So far, I have presented the reasoning behind the view of St. Luke as a physician choosing the examples from William Kirk Hobart's book. As was said at the beginning, he had other colleagues who shared in this hermeneutics of St. Luke, most notably von Harnack and Ramsey (but also those like Moffatt, Plummer, Hawkins, etc.). However, there was also a steady line of those who opposed this argumentation. Rick Strelan makes this systematisation quite obvious in his book[22], and I will briefly line it up here. In 1920, thirty-eight years after Hobart, Henry Cadbury publishes his book *The Style and Literary Method of Luke.* In there, we can find different and, according to the aura of the examples shown above, expected opposing arguments on the account of Luke's professional background. "The major argument against Hobart is that while he illustrates that medical writers did use the same terminology as Luke and vice versa, such terminology was not limited to medical writers and their texts. By similar argument and evidence, Luke could be constructed to belong to a wide variety and number of professions. As Cadbury says, on the basis of vocabulary, Luke could be as easily constructed as a lawyer or even as a mariner (Cadbury, 1927: 220)."[23] If this is so, then a large proportion of Hobart's arguments would appear to be very loose.

Other supporters of Cadbury follow the same line of thought. And if the language posits itself that way, then it is the right thing to direct contra-arguments like so. However, some modern proponents of the classical reading of St. Luke's profession, although not as adamant as Hobart, see the linguistic finesse which could speak pro Luke's medical education and work, but decide not to make a definite claim on whether he was really a physician or not.[24] Weissenrieder is even more adamant, and goes beyond sheer linguistic fitting: "'[T]he author of Luke-Acts had a particular interest in images of illness and healing, which were plausible within the ancient medical context, and far exceed word analogies' (2003: 365)" Yet, on the same topic, Strelan holds himself in a Cadbury-like manner. "If the Colossians statement about Luke did not exist, I very much doubt whether anyone would have suggested that Luke-Acts was written by a medical man. Even if one accepts at face value the evidence of Col 4:14 that Luke was a doctor, that does not rule out the possibility that Luke was a priest."

Summing this linguistic stale-mate, these peculiarities are all quite interesting and even important enough for delineation, and I believe classical linguists would find it the most so. However, if from a philosophical perspective we simple hold a supposition that Luke was a physician, other, more encompassing questions about the place of a physician emerge, and those are the central aspects I would like to brighten more.

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22 Rick Strelan, *Luke the Priest, The Autority of the Autor of the Third Gospel,* Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008, Chapter 8: pp. 101, 102.

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid,* Parsons (Mikael, 'The Character of the Lame Man in Acts 3–4', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 124 (2005): 295–312.), Weissenrieder (Weissenrieder, Annette, *Images of Illness in the Gospel of Luke: Insights of Ancient medical texts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

... there is more?

Iáomai is an interesting verb. "Healing" is its primary and a fully-covering meaning, and it is rightly so. If we were to show its particularities, it would range to three main meanings. 1) cure, heal. This was seen in Lk.4:18 ("he healed the brokenhearted") and 9:11("he cured those who needed cure"). 2) to make whole, as in Acts 9:34 ("Christ heals you/makes you whole"). 3) to bring salvation (Mt. 13:15: "and they don't turn[25] in order for me to heal/save them"; same in: Jn. 12:40 and Acts 28:27).

This is important to see in separate aspects, as "healing" and "making whole" stand very close in meaning, and not only in English. This of course has historical Christian aspects in its origins, but not only Christian. Health restoration is something very intuitive and ancient in the light of human desire and need. It is at least "going back to the previous state", and more philosophically and in some sense further developed: "restoration with something new". Both of these tropes are very well-known both generally and in the Christian sense. Christ performs miracles of healing and does so on frequent enough bases that they inevitably mean something more than just a performance of healing practice. He does so for multiple reasons, explicitly stating a couple of times how his divine power is to be, by the blessing of his Father, manifested like that. And not only does he heal and cure, he also raises from the dead, which then calls for verbalisation of something implicit, how death is the greatest illness there is. And indeed, Christianity revolves around this. Resurrection is more than restoration to life, as it could not have happened not only without the blessing of God and the roles each personality of Trinity has, but without the meaning of authentic novelty that such a "second" and "true" life would mean. Therefore, it is not only about examples of various diseases' healing, it is also about Christ's legacy. Still, something remains unanswered. We know how every healing act, every discrete blessing, like the one woman whose daughter is troubled by devil receives, are *miracles.* If we formulate those performances in the way the whole New Testament and its centuries-long exegesis does, we must ask ourselves what it means to frame Christ's deeds as miracles.

Firstly and foremostly, miracle always implies a disruption of some common and expected sets of events. It is supposed to do so, as it brings something new, usually in its complete manifest (like complete restoration to a healthy state), but it also means it does so in the way unknown, glorious, and even controversial. Christ's miracles check all of the mentioned. Not only does he gift sight to the one blind from birth, he explains how the man is not blind due to some parental sin, as was a usual belief at the time for the defect born from one's birth, and that, moreover, this blindness comes as a ground for his divine glory to manifest. He also makes miraculous healings on Saturday, and on one occasion makes a role of a physician in the society visible in New Testament: "And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Lk.5:14)[26] Priests are figures who, as human

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25 Also found translated as "convert", which is the meaning which is strived for here.

26 "The link between the priest and medical conditions is fairly obvious, at least in Jewish circles, since the priest was the one who ruled on purity matters. Well known is the case of the healed leper whom Jesus sends

links to the divine, are granted certain cleansing and healing powers, and that was not only the case in the Jewish society of the time.

But with all this, it seems the problem becomes even more complicated, and strides further from any solution. Not only do we posit miracles as a novelty and full restoration to previous, or even new unknown state, as is the case with the blind from birth, but we also need to incorporate previously mentioned meanings of healing into the question. If *iáomai* ranges from catering for wounds to "making whole" and salvation, it tells us Christianity literally brings something new and non-metaphorical to the concepts of life and after-life. But before we discuss those *par excellence* theological postulates from the side of Christ, I would like to focus more on human side and how we arrange ourselves towards miracles. The problematic side of it I find the most directly hit in the following quote from Dostoyevski's *The Grand Inquisitor:*

> "But You did not know that as soon as man rejects a miracle, he rejects God too; for man seeks not so much God as the miraculous. And as man cannot bear to be without the miraculous, he will create new miracles of his own for himself, and will worship deeds of sorcery and witchcraft, though he might be a hundred times over a rebel, heretic and infidel. You did not descend from the Cross when they shouted to You, mocking and reviling You, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." You did not descend, for again You would not enslave man by a miracle, and craved faith given freely, not based on a miracle. You craved for free love and not the base raptures of the slave before the might that has overawed him forever. But here too You judged men too highly, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature. Look round and judge; fifteen centuries have passed, look upon them. Whom have You raised up to Yourself? I swear, man is weaker and baser by nature than You believed him to be. Can he, can he do what you did? By showing him so much respect, You acted as though You had ceased to have compassion for him, because You asked too much from him—You who loved him more than Yourself! Had You respected him less, you would have asked less of him. That would have been more like love, for his burden would have been lighter."[27]

From this passage, I will highlight three ideas. Unfortunately, the scope of this paper and its main topic will not be enough to fully develop thoughts on all three of them, but I will line out the most important concepts. Professor Davor Džalto had given a lecture in the series *Contemporary readings of The Grand Inquisitor*[28] and, interestingly enough, he also quotes this passage. I will occasionally turn to his interpretations and compare them when needed.

That man will reject God as soon as he rejects miracles is perhaps the most negative aspect of miraculous approach one can think of, and the burden of it cannot be attributed solely to the figure of the Grand Inquisitor and what his demonic form stands for. The hardship of it is found in the truthful assessment of the Inquisitor. He sees through that as-

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off to the priest to have his health condition and purity status ratified (Luke 5:12–16). The cleansing ritual the priest is to conduct over lepers (Lev 14:1–9) had implicit purifying powers, if not in itself the power to heal. It is true, however, that the evidence for priests as healers is slight.", Rick Strelan, *Luke the Priest, The Autority of the Autor of the Third Gospel,* Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2008, Chapter 8: p. 102.

27 F. M. Dostoyevski, *Notes from Underground, The Grand Inquisitor,* Plume books, Penguin Group (USA), 2003.
28 Davor Džalto, *The Grand Inquisitor: One anarchistic reading,* October 4th 2019, National Library of Serbia, Belgrade

pect of human nature which usually finds easy solutions irresistible. Christ himself in the parable of the ten lepers (Lk. 17:14), similarly as in the previously mentioned one, sends lepers to the priests who should confirm the men had been healed. And as happens in some similar stories, only one of the healed, the Samaritan, comes back and praises the Lord truly. The nine of them did not return. Perhaps ultimately speaking, we, as Christ did (Lk. 17:17), can say the nine show ungratefulness and although physically transformed, they remain *untouched*[29] by faith and thus true transformation. But even though that is probably ontologically and therefore true on the fundamental level of meaning, I believe we can lose much of meaning if we neglect something profoundly human here. Repentance and repeating come hand in hand and are processes which spiral through one's life, especially if the one is a believer. The visual aspect inherent in a fable-like narrative of the New Testament is such for a reason, like most imagery forms presented in either word or a picture, and this form represents condensed truthfulness, intended to be grasped intuitively and in that cognitive aspect: immediately. However, in the line of the current comparison of the narrative of New Testament, and holy scriptures in general, one human life's pace comes as a stretched image. In that slowness one should firstly spot the inherent weaknesses of such a nature (and nurture), which would love the solution to his/her own problem first and rather than God Himself. Indeed, understanding the gnoseological aspect of human comportment could perhaps lead to giving credit to the Inquisitor, which then shows theological wrongness[30] and Inquisitor's successful manipulation with Christ's intentions, which are obviously different. However, that is not what I have in mind, and therefore, dedicating the credited attention to the point the Inquisitor tries to make is valid and important, foremostly as a preventive measure.

There immediately follows another accusation the Inquisitor directs to Christ, and that is at the same time the culmination in this passage: that he strived for free faith and free love, and for that purpose, chose not to perform the final miracle, which would be envisaged in the descension from the cross. And from here on, the Inquisitor develops his narrative as something I would call "miraculous satisfaction", which portrays, in fact, human unstable grounds with freedom. Freedom in this context has to be taken in a twofold meaning: as what people perceive it to be and then try to accomplish, and what it means in a transcendent, God-given potential. And that is exactly what the Inquisitor strives for. But not only does he detect human never-finished, centuries-long issues with dealing with this joyous gift freedom is supposed to be, he also goes a step further claiming it is unsuitable for the weak being human is. That way, we come to the third point I wanted to focus, and that is: "you asked too much from him". This thought could be very well compared to the ending Martin Scorsese depicts in his *The Last Temptation of Christ*. "He's tested you and He is happy with you. He doesn't want your blood. He said: Let Him die in a dream, but let Him live His life.", says Satan in an angelic form. Although a total analogy between hu-

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29 I have discussed "touch" in the New Testament and in the context of miracles at some greater length in my MA thesis and another paper: *[title omitted for blind review]*
30 Džalto also mentions this in the lecture.

man commitment to God or the lack of such and Christ's passions cannot be drawn, this is indeed a very similar way the Inquisitor acts. Therefore, his final claim in this passage is that burden imposed on humans in the form of freedom, which should then eventually lead to such a love, such faith, relies on false impressions about human capabilities, for "they are slaves, though rebellious by nature". Later on in a book, the Inquisitor explains to Christ how humans would gladly trade off freedom for happiness. So now, when happiness is introduced, we can fully view a core of this story.

Critique of miracles performed by Christ presented solely this way lose their remembrance of blessing and accordance with the Father, which is *sine qua non* condition under which they were taking place. If by any chance Christ accepted the last temptation of a descension from the cross, that indeed would appear as the ultimate miracle in the witness' eyes. But that would at the same time mean two other things: temptation of his Father and enslavement of people by miracles the Inquisitor talks about. Hence we come to realise how not only miracles were done with divine providence, but also to the extent which would not step into the essentially granted domain of human freedom, which would then make it only a formal domain. Although wrong, the Inquisitor's view still remains challenging enough, for he sees through the hierarchy of human desires, whence it seems to show that happiness comes before freedom.

From that aspect I pose the same question about health and well-being. The problematic scenario which has just been presented reflects fully to the matter of health. We can ask how would someone blind from birth ever gain sight without a transformation which goes beyond available means of healing, but that would still not be able to cover the full meaning of men's *acceptance* of healing. For the healing we are talking about ultimately always means ontological transformation of "old" to a "new" man, in the well-known way of the whole Christian paradigm. Therefore, a necessary answer to this follows from that "stretched image" of the patient. If death is in a way the greatest illness there is, then a relation of a man towards sin is quite parallel with the relation of patient and general health. The latter is clearly seen from the state when one is overall healthy and then at some point falls from that state, at least temporarily. Also, from that context it is not by coincidence that Christ follows almost every pardon of sin with the words: "Your faith saved you." and/or: "Go and do not sin anymore." Again, there is no proof people will indeed make no sins. Also, there is no proof that those sins would not be pardoned perhaps again and again, *seven times seventy-seven times,* even. The response we receive from the New Testament is perhaps the best seen through the Parable of the ten virgins and the story of a man who cares only for his material goods and does not realise he could be gone any day (Lk. 12:16-20). However, the fact with which we are meeting this teaching from the Bible halfway is that we usually do not or even cannot approach God without the actual necessity. I hold this impulse is usually automatically judged more than it is appraised in the circle of practical theology, in a relation between priests and their parishioners. It is not to ever be understood as a means for sheer indulgence, but embraced as a necessary start of one's relationship with God. Even if it is not a wish *for* particular thing, it is still a wish for some sort of a completion only this transcendent effort can provide. Both of them are manifests of our

prayers. Andrew Louth supports this claim and sees it furthermore as a start of every actively contemplated theology, personal and general. "Where do you start your theology from, anyway? Very traditionally, in the West you start from the question of being, some sort of metaphysics. [...] I am inspired by Jean-Luc Marion who talks about Dionysus Areopagite and his way of talking about God through cause. [...] And so, God is the one whom we beseech, the one whom we address our prayers."[31] And precisely there should we place the patient who, as a man in this particular instance, behaves the same way. For the previously said now circles the contra-argument we can give to the Inquisitor, seeing that freedom is a procedural accomplishment, which usually balances back and forth our personal ascension towards God and the divine.

This paper questions the meaning of a doctor, but one cannot be completed without another that is patient. When Thomas W. Belcher finishes his book on the same topic and from the similar period when Hobart and others wrote, he concludes with sixteen points.[32] While he generally follows the same line of the linguistic interpretation of Luke's terminology, he firstly points out how such diseases and illness were chosen which could either not be healed by man partially or at all, or would be healed imperfectly. He also notes how miracles were not the source for non-believing for the people of the past times, but are for the modern readers (Point 8.). However, the most peculiar points are 13th and 14th. He claims how: "These cures were but a restoration of primitive order, health" and "That *how* this was affected, is not more inexplicable than some notoriously inexplicable truths of medical and physical science in the present day.". It seems we could object to the claim in point 13 if we understood it as a lessening of the divine in the miraculous. Especially so in the light of the previously manifested perception of the whole spectre healing can have. But, if we approach it from the role of freedom, the another piece of this twofold puzzle, then indeed, although for many these miracles were a way and reason to believe and strive for the another level of *iáomai,* for others they remain a beginning of a physically renewed life and had most probably ended there. In a very different sense should we see point 14. Although clearly inhuman in their effect, Belcher sees no greater difficulty in explaining those miracles than in complex scientific explanations. While this can be subjected to further examination, for now we can settle with the reminder that contemporary philosophy of science raises the same question when it comes to the examination of either excessive glorification or reluctance for science in the public domain. However, this remains quite an interesting apologetic point for reflection, even if seen independently from the topic of this paper.

On the other hand, point 14 concerns the mechanism of either scientific or spiritual. Physicians as Luke are presumed to have been also concerned with mechanisms, as they are a means for healing. However, not in a sense that they would "take apart and scrutinize" Christ's miracles, but that they would witness, embrace and support their human knowl-

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31 Conference "Contemplative traditions: Theory and Practice", Panel discussion, December 13th 2019, Sigtuna Sweden.

32 Thomas Waugh Belcher, *Our Lord's Miracles of Healing,* Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welch, Oxford and London, 1872., pp. 255-257

edge through a faithful approach. If that is the case, the last question remaining to ask is what *Christus medicus* trope stands for. "Rather than appealing to Jesus' healing ministry, the *Christus medicus* trope implies reference to God's ultimate redemptive sacrifice on the cross in Christ and his resurrection while simultaneously insinuating that redemption is as corporeal in nature as is the work of medical practitioners, an aspect pointedly caught by the North-African Church Father Tertullian (ca. 160 – 220) in his famed phrase: "The body is the pivot of salvation. [*Caro cardo salutis.*]"[33] As the equality between soul and body is non-disputable and the prime authentic aspect of Christianity, the problem bifurcates in two complementary ways for understanding *Christus medicus.*

Firstly, we should remember how missionary work of the church included care for the weak and ill. St. Basil the Great opened the first hospital with the capacity of some 400 beds, and on a less formal level, care for the sick and thus usually stigmatized was something bound for the Christian legacy. In that sense, it is no surprise that charity and missionary Christian work has evolved greatly through centuries to follow, and continues to the present day. However, secularisation of states and scientific, technical and in that aspect also medical development, fell at parallel times, which meant disassociation with care as something primarily Christian, now seen as primarily and simply humanistic. That is not wrong per se, and moreover, I believe secularisation as such can prove beneficial for both religion and state, and for their endeavours in the medical field, in this case. Yet, it poses a question whether there is something specifically Christian, not simply left out (for there always will be), but needed in today's medical efforts. Indeed, glorifying the Giver of life himself gives something essential to medicine.[34] But what about abortion, euthanasia and other practices doctors perform and Church opposes? Here, I am not planning on discussing bioethical problems and ethical codes of medical practitioners, but the core of this question.

And that core is still placed on the grounds of freedom, and the second way of talking about *Christus medicus*, which cannot align its meaning in the City of God and the City of Man. Thus, it is normal to expect that medicine as a directly human-oriented activity will face the same discrepancy as some more formal metaphysical issues. But there remains a live symbol of a godly and human physician and the point the latter can strive to meet. Either one restores one aspect of human nature at minimum, even if she is opposing Christian teachings. It perhaps errs in the Socratic understanding of error from "not knowing", but it does so in the conviction of restoration, which is, regarding the expertise in medical knowledge and specific religious sensitivity for human relations, still a point for a healthy dialogue and approach in mutual secular and religious intertwined contribution to the practice of medicine and wellbeing of patients. However, in more strict terms, one should always return to the *imitatio Christi*. Grundmann quotes St. Gregory of Nyssa on that occasion: "This is to say, imitation of Christ can never mean endeavouring to become

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33 Christoffer H. Grundmann, *Christ as Physician: The ancient Christus medicus trope and Christian medical missions as imitation of Christ,* Christian Journal for Global Health 5(3):3-11, 2018, p.4
34 *Ibid,* p.9

a replica of Christ since Christ had "qualities" — being of God and without sin (Heb 4:15) — "which our nature cannot imitate." Imitation, rather, means to live a life which is translucent for Christ as the Lord. Hence, the call to imitate Christ asks for authentic personal piety bearing as untainted a witness to Christ as possible."**35**

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The four Evangelists are traditionally also represented with animal symbols and each bears some specific meaning of Christ's nature. St. Luke's animal is winged ox, which is interpreted as a symbol of sacrifice and service Christ put through. This is at the same time perfectly compatible with the role a physician should have. So even if this does nothing in favour of the historical certification that Luke indeed was a physician, it subtly and tacitly reminds us how he will probably never be stripped of that meaning. That further means that analysis of a figure of a physician from the context of the one of the Evangelists places more detailed understanding of this profession, and, ultimately, physical and sacrificial aspects people should adopt.**36**

After healing the one leper whom he sent to the priest for verification of the lifted disease, Christ senses the disturbance in the hearts of the present Pharisees, who hear his words of sin forgiveness as blasphemous. "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven', or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" (Lk. 5:23) From God's perspective, it is the same to absolve from sin and perform a miracle. At the same time, one who cannot do either of them, cannot do any of them, and vice versa. Perhaps human doctor can never be a match and a candidate for this fundamental type of healing, but he can do more than enough for a patient from his expertise and philosophy of life. Even without the practice of medicine under the Christian wing we witness the whole field of knowledge dedicated to the preservation of life, which is even for those who build for the other-worldly something essential and a necessary ground for the commencement of that building. Lastly, contemporary medicine continues to work on the lightning of the patient side of the triad doctor-patient-illness, as well as the doctor-patient relationship, which is probably the most explicitly seen through the efforts of narrative medicine. Although it can work independently from any particular spiritual and religious doctrine, narrative medicine can be enriched with them, and in that case perhaps works the best for those who are already living their lives by a particular religious teaching. However, at the same time I am not inclined to place all of the extra focus on the patient in the field of narrative medicine, as is usually implicitly expect-

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35 *Ibid,* p.7
36 Cf: "Theologians of the fourth century — Eusebius of Caesarea (260-339), Athanasius (295-373), Cyrill of Jerusalem (313-387), Gregory of Nazianz (ca. 326-390), Ambrose of Milan (333-397), Basil of Caesarea (329-378), and his brother Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 331-394), had no hesitation to call Christ "physician", even a "spiritual Hippocrates."19 They spoke of the Word of God as "medication for life eternal" and listed repentance, baptism, the eucharist, and, yes, martyrdom as other "means of healing." Convinced that *Christus medicus* accomplished His mission in the Church through the priests' ecclesial office, they compared the pastoral ministry to activities of doctors, too, who had to administer bitter medicines, and, especially, to surgeons, who had to cut and burn, pierce, and amputate in order to bring about healing; such comparisons not only referred to actual surgical practices of the day, but also to cruel tortures martyrs had to endure.", *Ibid,* p. 5

ed. Christian doctors and thinkers can contribute much more to the community if they actively acknowledge and cherish the achievements of medical practices, while preserving their authentic role in the care for the human body and soul. That way, the gap between the believing and non-believing will have another opportunity to diminish, as both sides will be enriched for the Christian teaching freed from stereotypical rigidness and dogmatisms, which is still to some extent being associated with the denial of medical treatments. On the other hand, it can open the only good way[37] for the dialogue with the rest of the world, and offer answers and vital commentaries on the issues people face up to this day, in all fields of life, and especially in the question of illness, life and death.

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Andrew Louth, Conference "Contemplative traditions: Theory and Practice", Panel discussion, December 13th 2019, Sankt Ignatios Theological Academy, Sigtuna, Sweden.

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37 Cf. "Also, while it is difficult to maintain excellence when working within the confines of a shoestring budget, Christian medical missionaries should be aware that more funds do not necessarily warrant the Christian character of their doings. Further, faith-based institutions nowadays not only compete in almost every country with secular agencies; they also have to meet the standards of the professions set by secular boards not concerned about Christian values. Therefore, Christian medical missions cannot sufficiently be justified by personal devotion and commitment to the task nor with strategic considerations. Considerations like these fail to notice that exploiting human suffering as opportunity for evangelization and church growth compromises the integrity of both, medicine and the Gospel. Working under false pretence is neither reconcilable with professional ethos nor with Christian standards, one of which is refusing "to practice cunning" (2 Cor 4:2).", *Ibid,* p. 9

Romilo Knežević

Freedom and Personality
in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor
A Modern Question to a Church Father

Introduction

After George Florovsky's claim that 'the Fathers are the eternal category and criterion of the truth',[1] it has become clear more than ever that the perennial question of Orthodox theology is precisely one of how to read the Church Fathers.[2] Have the Fathers, for instance, succeeded in developing a satisfying concept of divine personhood or hypostasis? If they have not, then the most important doctrines of Christianity, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, do not have the kind of substantial basis as is often claimed they have. Moreover, can we elucidate what is human personhood unless we clarify what is divine personhood? What does it mean to say that we believe in a personal God, if we do not know what personhood is? In this paper I would like to propose a critical approach towards the theology of the patristic period, and in particular of Maximus the Confessor, one of the most prominent Church Fathers, who was born in 580 AD and died in 682. For this purpose I shall use some of the remarks made by Nicolas Berdyaev, a noted Russian religious philosopher.

Berdyaev's main argument is that Christianity has not yet revealed itself in its fullness as an experience of freedom.[3] The Russian philosopher claims that this is due to the incomplete Christian concept of freedom; or, in other words, the Christianity which is represented in the teachings of the patristic period has mostly struggled to produce a negative notion of freedom, that is, freedom *from* passions, whereas freedom *for*, which would demand the activation of human creative capacities, has been largely overlooked.

> Salvation from sin, from perdition, is not the final purpose of religious life: salvation is always *from* something and life should be *for* something... Man's chief end is not to be saved but to mount up, creatively. For this creative upsurge salvation from sin and evil is necessary.[4]

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1 Ways of Russian Theology, in Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, vol. 4: Aspects of Church History, (Vaduz: Bücherververtriebsanstalt, 1987), p. 195.

2 Florovsky also argued that "it is not enough to refute or reject western errors or mistakes—they must be overcome by the new creative act." The "new creative act" is depicted as "a historiosophical exegesis of the western religious tragedy", which is to be performed with "greater care and sympathy by Orthodox theology than has been the case until now." Ibid., p. 15-16.

3 The Meaning of the Creative Act, trans. by Donald A. Lowrie, (San Rafael CA: Semantron Press, 2008), p. 158.

4 Ibid., p. 105.

Berdyaev's concern is in how man can exist as a separate and autonomous being with respect to God. Here it is obvious that Berdyaev tackles one of the most important issues of patristic theology, i.e., the question of the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Christ. As it is well known, the council of Chalcedon dealt extensively with this problem, and the autonomy of human nature was preserved in the definition which explained that both natures exist in Christ in an "unconfused" way. The theme of two natures existing in Christ certainly represented one of the most important problems in the history of Christian theology, and there is almost a common consent, at least among Orthodox scholars,[5] that it was resolved in a satisfactory manner,[6] not least because of the immense contribution of Maximus the Confessor's theology. Nevertheless, many centuries later, Berdyaev deemed that it was necessary to raise this issue again. Moreover—and I would like to emphasize this—the Russian philosopher claimed boldly that "in the Christianity of the early Fathers there was a monophysite tendency."[7]

Berdyaev's most significant argument about human freedom is that "freedom is the power to create out of nothing."[8] According to Berdyaev, man is able to be free, that is, to create out of nothing (although not without a medium, as God does).[9] If this claim plays such an important role in the question about human freedom, as I believe it does, and in particular with regard to a *formative ontological principle of personhood*, and if this is not obvious from the texts of the Fathers but could only be extracted with difficulty, then, is it not possible to speak about, as Berdyaev puts it, the "monophysite tendency" in the Christianity of the patristic period? However, since the Fathers claim that nature never exists in a "naked form",[10] that is, without a hypostasis, I find it necessary to amend Berdyaev's argument, so as to claim that in the works of the Fathers, but also in the theology of the most contemporary Orthodox theologians, even among those who are said or claim to be "personalists", there is a tendency towards impersonalism.

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5   For a more critical approach see Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, (Berkeley: CA, Apocryphile Press, 2011), pp. 389-390. Schleiermacher, for instance, writes that the ecclesiastical formulae concerning the Person of Christ need to be subjected to continual criticism: "The task of the critical process is to hold the ecclesiastical formulae to strict agreement with the foregoing analysis of our Christian self-consciousness, in order, partly, judge how far they agree with it at least in essentials, partly (with regard to individual points), to inquire how much of the current form of expression is to be retained, and how much, on the other hand, had better be given up..." Ibid., p. 390.

6   There is almost no doubt, at least amongst Orthodox theologians, that the question of the two natures in Christ was resolved once and for all. Here I give just one example: "... Christ who is the perfect communion of God and man unto all ages..." Nikolaos Loudovikos, A Eucharistic Ontology; Maximus the Confessor's Eucharistic Ontology of Being as Dialogical Reciprocity, (Brookline: Massachusetts, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2010), p.177. However, one can notice that most Orthodox theologians also believe that Christian anthropology is going to be one of the central issues of our century due to the lack of sufficient doctrine concerning the human person. Nevertheless, the question of the human person is essentially related to the issue of the two natures in Christ and these two problems cannot be treated separately.

7   Berdyaev, p. 80.

8   Ibid., p. 144-46.

9   *Dream and Reality; An Essay in Autobiography*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950), p. 212-3.

10 For instance, Maximus writes, 'the fact that no nature is without hypostasis does not make it into a hypostasis but rather into something hypostasized (ἐνυπόστατον)...' *Opuscula*, PG 91, 264A.

Nature and Person in Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor

There is no consensus among Orthodox scholars about the concepts of personhood and nature in the teachings of the Fathers. On the contrary, this issue became a serious controversy in several recent publications.[11] As a result, we have presently two antagonized factions. The first group (Lossky, Yannaras and Zizioulas) finds in the Fathers a highly developed concept of personhood which in several points resembles a modern personalist position. However, it is with a certain reserve that I put Lossky together with the other two. The Russian theologian expressed clearly his doubts as to whether one can find an elaborate doctrine of the human person in the Fathers.

> For my part, I must admit that until now I have not found what one might call *an elaborated doctrine of the human person* in patristic theology, alongside its very precise teaching on divine persons or hypostases. However, there is *a Christian anthropology* among the Fathers of the first eight centuries, as well as later on in Byzantium and in the West; and it is unnecessary to say that these doctrines of man are clearly personalist. It could not have been otherwise for a theological doctrine based upon the revelation of a living and personal God who created man 'according to his own image and likeness.'"[12]

Lossky's position is clear—the Fathers have not produced a developed teaching on the human person, but the notion of personhood can be extracted from their anthropology. This anthropology can only be personalist because it is developed from a doctrine of a personal God. In other words, Lossky detects a lack in the theology of the Fathers—a lack of an elaborate notion of human personhood, although it is not quite clear how it is possible to have a "very precise teaching on divine persons" and not to be able, using analogy to a certain extent, to work out a notion of the human hypostasis. This is why I venture a claim that a theory of human personhood was not formulated because the Fathers have not yet completed their work in elaborating a theology of divine personhood.

The logical consequence of a deficient theory of the human hypostasis is the absence of a genuine concept of freedom of a particular human person. The second group of theo-

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11 "The theology of personhood as developed from Lossky through Yannaras to Zizioulas has left at least two issues which future Orthodox theologians must confront. The first is a perennial question for Orthodox theologians and it deals with how one is to read the writings of the Church Fathers. Lossky's, Yannaras' and especially Zizioulas' attempt to root their theologies of personhood in the Fathers, particularly the Cappadocians, has recently been criticised. The criticism keeps in the foreground the ongoing debate on how Orthodox Christians should 'theologize'. Aristotle Papanikolaou, 'Personhood and its exponents in twentieth-century Orthodox theology', in Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology, edited by Mary B. Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, p. 241. Zizioulas' approach to the Fathers was under scrutiny in the article by Lucian Turcescu, "Persons" versus "Individual", and other Modern Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa, in Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa, Sarah Coakley (ed), Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 97-109. Aristotle Papanikolaou answered to this criticism in Is John Zizioulas an Existentialist in Disguise? Response to Lucian Turcescu, Modern Theology 20:4, October 2004, p. 601-607. See also: Melchisedec Törönen, Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Johannes Zachhuber, Gregory of Nyssa on Individuals, http//:oxford.academia.edu. JohannesZachhuber/Papers.

12 In the Image and Likeness of God, (Crestwood, New York 10707, St Vladimir's Press 1985), p. 112. Emphasis added.

logians is not completely homogenous. They all seem to doubt, in differing ways,[13] that the Cappadocian Fathers had an elaborate concept of divine persons, if person is to be understood as an absolute uniqueness with ultimate ontological identity. Melchisedec Törönen, for instance, is very much in line with Loudovikos' position, since he does not regard this absence as a failing of patristic theology. Although Törönen does not mention Zizioulas by name, it is clear that he uses the metonymy "modern personalist"[14] to denote Lossky, Zizioulas, and Yannaras. Holding his position on the "freedom of nature", Törönen can hardly share sympathies for contemporary personalism, although he never claims this openly.

Johannes Zachhuber is even more reserved with regard to taking a position vis-à-vis modern personalist trends and his focus is primarily to demonstrate that Gregory of Nyssa was not an individualist.[15]

Lucian Turcescu is probably the sharpest critic of Zizioulas, so I shall start with him. Turcescu's position can be summarized as follows: in the time of the Cappadocians, the notion of individual/person "was only emerging".[16] This is why Zizioulas' argument that the Fathers make a distinction between person and individual, in the modern personalist and existentialist sense, is rather unsubstantiated. Primarily basing his argument on the work of Gregory of Nyssa, Turcescu tries to demonstrate that the Cappadocians *did* use the terms 'person' and 'individual' interchangeably, i.e., that the Cappadocians regarded 'person' as individual in Zizioulas' terminology. Therefore, despite Zizioulas' claims, there is no such a thing as a relational ontology of person in the theology of the Fathers.

We have to elucidate carefully what Turcescu claims here. Zizioulas explains that the 'individual' is, first, a complex of qualities that cannot guarantee uniqueness, and, second, that the 'individual' can be enumerated, whilst the uniqueness of person defies such an enumeration.[17] In both cases Zizioulas describes the individual in sharp contrast with the person—an individual is different from a person because it does not possess uniqueness. This means that Turcescu's argument that the Cappadocians did not have a relational ontology rests fundamentally on his more elementary argument, i.e., that according to the Fathers, person equals individual. This is because the character of a relationship is dependent essentially on the character of related entities.[18] If the work of the Fathers does not contain a notion of person-

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13 One of the differences is that Törönen's work is based entirely on Maximus, although, of course, he also mentions the Cappadocians, whereas Zachhuber and Turcescu concentrate on Gregory of Nyssa. However, Gregory of Nyssa, together with his brother Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and the Alexandrian Christological tradition, are theologians who exercised a highly significant dogmatic influence on Maximus and the analysis of his theory of person is therefore relevant. See: Andrew Louth, Maximus the Confessor, p. 26-28.

14 Union and Distinction in the Thought of St Maximus the Confessor, p. 54.

15 Gregory of Nyssa on Individuals, p. 12.

16 "'Person' versus 'Individual', and Other Misreadings of Gregory of Nyssa", in Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa, Sarah Coakley (ed), Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p. 103.

17 A. Papanikolaou, *op. cit.*, p. 601.

18 "The thrust of Turcescu's argument can be paraphrased as follows: by looking primarily at the work of Gregory of Nyssa, it can be shown that the Cappadocian Fathers do in fact identify person with individual as Zizioulas defines the latter and, therefore, there is no such a thing as a relational ontology of person in the Trinitarian theology of the Cappadocian Fathers." A. Papanikolaou, op. cit., p. 602.

hood—understood as unique particularity in an absolute sense—then relationship makes little sense indeed. Genuine relationship exists only if each of the entities involved possesses an absolute otherness and particularity, and, as a consequence, has something to communicate to the other. That is, without a notion of an absolute otherness of the other a relationship *without confusion* is inconceivable.[19] The question is—can we talk about a genuine relationship if the related entities melt into each other—would this not be simply an end of a relationship? As I shall demonstrate shortly, without a concept of personhood with full ontological *identity*, both Trinitarian theology and Christology lose their foundation.

That the Cappadocians, according to Turcescu, have indeed regarded the term 'person' as an equivalent with the concept of the individual is even clearer from the following quotation:

The Cappadocian Fathers were not aware of the dangers of individualism and perhaps this is why they did not make many efforts to distinguish between person and individual. They were more concerned with distinguishing between person or individual, on the one hand, and nature or substance, on the other hand, in connection with the Christian God. At that time, the three divine persons were not properly understood as three different entities while each was one and the same God.[20]

If at the time of the Cappadocians "the three divine persons were not properly understood as three different entities", it follows that the Cappadocian concept of person was similar to Zizioulas' concept of individual, or, in different words, that the Cappadocians understood person as something not possessing uniqueness and full ontological identity.[21] However, in the case when the person is understood simply as a mask or modality without a distinct identity, it is hardly possible to distinguish between person and individual, on the one hand, and nature or substance, on the other. However, according to the Cappadocians, it is precisely this difference—distinction between the *logos of nature* and the *tropos hyparxeos*—that makes the doctrine of the Trinity possible. Following the Fathers, Maximus explains that personhood is a unique *tropos* or *mode* according to which substance or nature is appropriated. If personhood lacks this uniqueness, it follows that it cannot create its unique *tropos*.

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19 Törönen is aware of this: "Particularity and its integrity is for both [Greek patristic theology and the existentialist type of personalism] of immense importance. Unity which annihilates the particularity of those united cannot be true unity." Op. cit., p. 59. Nevertheless, we shall see shortly how Törönen understands "particularity".

20 "Person" versus "Individual", p. 106-107. I have to say I find it rather difficult to believe that the Fathers "were not aware of the dangers of individualism", since this would imply that they lived in some sort of Eschaton. This claim also entails that the Fathers did not have strong sense of identity of their unique persons, because the question of individualism cannot be raised in a context which lacks a notion of identity. However, if the Fathers had not had a sense of identity of their own persons, they would not have been able to start with the issue of hypostasis regarding Trinitarian theology. The question of three hypostases and one (unity of) God is, essentially, a question of personhood and individual. It seems to me that sometimes we think of the first centuries of Christianity as some sort of a Golden Age in which all the questions of distinction, separation and unity were not present.

21 I disagree on this point with Zizioulas, because I think we cannot say that an individual lacks uniqueness or identity. If it were so, it would follow that there is no one to create relationship or, rather, that relationship is self-created. An individual, I think, is rather a personhood in becoming.

Finally, in support of his contention Turcescu explains that the Fathers—in this particular case Gregory of Nyssa—employ the term hypostasis even when referring to a horse.[22] This is possibly the strongest argument one can use in order to dismiss a Zizioulian or, rather, personalist interpretation of the Fathers. If a non-rational animal, a horse, is a person in the same way as a human being, this means that the Greek patristic thought did not conceive of person as an absolute particularity.

Törönen uses the same argument, but only as an introduction for a much longer scrutiny of the notion of person in Maximus. Törönen's position can be summarized as follows: according to the Fathers, "what the universal is in relation to the particular, this the essence is in relation to the hypostasis".[23] In other words, things which share the same essence belong to one nature, whereas "hypostasis" denotes things which share the same nature or are composed of the same nature but *differ in number*.[24] Maximus endorses these two claims when he writes that "hypostasis is that which exists distinctly and by-itself, since they say that 'hypostasis' is an essence together with particular properties and it differs from other members of the same genus in number".[25] From these quotations Törönen draws the conclusion that "a hypostasis is an instance of a nature ["not something opposed to essence"], distinguished in number from other individual instances of the same nature by its particular properties".[26] Törönen rightly observes that an understanding of hypostasis as particular immediately raises the question: can simply any particular being be a person? Does this mean that there is no difference between rational and non-rational creatures? Törönen opts for an understanding of the term "hypostasis" as a "merely grammatical tool in the toolkit of a Byzantine logician"—"if we are to understand the theological discussions in the Greek-speaking world of the first millennium, we must come to terms with this merely logical notion of the 'person'"[27]. In other words, in the final instance he endorses a rather astounding position that *there is no* difference between rational and non-rational creatures.[28]

> What the sources themselves seem quite strongly to suggest is, in fact, that there is no such distinction [between rational and non-rational creatures]. The modern personalist would find the following statement of Gregory of Nyssa rather disappointing, even off-putting.

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[22] Ibid., p. 103.

[23] Törönen here quotes Basil, Ep. 214 (Deferrari 3), who is quoted by Maximus, *Ep.* 15 (PG91), 545A; Törönen, op. cit., p. 53.

[24] This is a synoptic account of the quote from Leontius of Byzantium, Nest. et Eut. (PG 86), 1280A, quoted in Törönen, ibid., p. 53.

[25] Ep. 15, PG 91, 557D; quoted in Törönen, *ibid.,* p. 53.

[26] Ibid., p. 54.

[27] Ibid., p. 55.

[28] One cannot but be astonished as to how one can come to such a position, which totally overlooks the concept of image and likeness, simply because one is *a priori* against every theological theory which does not originate from the "first millennium". I think here we have a very good example of what happens, if in one's interpretation of the Fathers, one does not have, alongside indispensible humility, enough courage to take responsibility to follow the "spirit" of the Fathers (to recall Florovsky), rather than the dead letters from several quotes which are taken out of a wider context of Trinitarian theology and Christology. This could be also a good illustration for Berdyaev's words that freedom, in this case freedom to interpret, is not a privilege, but duty.

'One thing is distinguished from another either by essence or by hypostasis, or both by essence and hypostasis. On the one hand, man is distinguished from a horse by essence, and Peter is distinguished from Paul by hypostasis. On the other hand, such-and-such a hypostasis of man is distinguished from such-and-such *a hypostasis of horse* both by essence and hypostasis'.[29]

However, Törönen seems to neglect Zizioulas' answer to this critique, an answer which I find rather reasonable. Zizioulas does not try to hide that Maximus applies the term *hypostasis* to everything that exists and not only to human beings. He observes,

Since the Fathers, argument goes, use the term *hypostasis*... to describe non-humans as well, such a personalism cannot be found in them. This criticism, based mainly on a literalistic treatment of the patristic sources, entirely misses the theological point, emphasized particularly by St Maximus, that all created beings exist as different *hypostases* only by virtue of their relation to, and dependence upon the free hypostasis of human being, and ultimately of Christ.[30]

Törönen then proceeds to explain that contemporary theology understands personhood as founded on five notions. He stresses that the first four, rationality, freedom, relatedness, and self-consciousness, nevertheless, are connected, not with the personal, but with the universal. It is only in the fifth concept—particularity—that personalism and patristic theology converge. However, if we try to find whether Törönen has to say something more about the description of particular or hypostasis, we see that he only reiterates what he has already explained. In other words, Törönen claims that 'particular' in Greek patristic thought is solely a logical term. He quotes Maximus in saying that the otherness of particularity is a matter of difference, and the difference is embedded in the *logoi* of creatures.

[It is] by means of these *logoi*... that the different beings differ [from one another]. For the different beings would not differ from one another, had the *logoi* by means of which they have come into being no difference.[31]

The particular possesses otherness because of the difference, and the difference is something rooted in the particular in the form of the *logoi* of creation. Are we, then, to conclude that the *logos* of each particular represents its *hypostasis*, or rather the *very identity* (ταυτότης) of the hypostasis, which means that each one of us possesses a totally unique characteristic upon which we build our relationships with others? Törönen does not say that. It seems to me that in trying to avoid the term 'hypostasis' Törönen embraces the concept of *logos*, but he does not explain in what way these two terms are distinct. The Fathers must have had some reason for using both terms, and it is apparent that they are not using them as synonyms. Why would it not be possible to regard *logos* as an element of hypostasis, as the root of its identity? Törönen's reasoning is rather odd, because only two pages further he quotes a passage in which Maximus writes about the "*logos* of the essential community" and the "*logos* of personal otherness". This paragraph deserves our attention.

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[29] Ibid*.,* p. 54. Quote from Gregory of Nyssa, Comm. not. (GNO 3, part 1), 29; italics added by Törönen.

[30] Communion&Otherness, p. 24, n36. Also: "The *logoi* of creation on which the 'logos of nature' depends can only truly exist in the hypostasis of the Logos. From the Christian point of view, there is no other way for creation to exist authentically except 'in Christ', which from the patristic standpoint means to exist in the *hypostasis* of the Logos. There is no escape from personhood in Christian cosmology." Ibid., p 66. See also p. 32.

[31] Ibid*.,* p. 59; quote from Maximus: *Amb.* 22 (PG 91), 1256D.

[Although some beings share the same essence and are consubstantial by virtue of the *logos* of the essential community], on the other hand, they are of different hypostases (ἑτερουπόστατα) by virtue of the *logos* of personal otherness which distinguishes one from another. The hypostases do not coincide in their characteristic distinguishing marks, but each one by virtue of the sum of its characteristic properties bears a most particular *logos* of its own hypostasis, and in accordance with this *logos* it admits of no community with those that are connatural and consubstantial with it.[32]

If I read this paragraph properly, it seems that Maximus claims precisely what I have mentioned, i.e., that each hypostasis bears its "most particular *logos*". It follows that the "most particular *logos*" is an element of hypostasis, moreover, that it is the root of identity.

Zizioulas interprets Maximus in a similar way, when he writes that,

Maximus is keen to distinguish between *diaphora* (difference) and *diairesis* (division). For him, *diaphora* is an ontological characteristic because each being has its *logos* which gives it its particular identity, without which it would cease to be itself and thus to be at all. Without *diaphora* there is no being, for there is no being apart from beings. This is an ontology applied also to Trinitarian theology, as well as to Christology and to cosmology.[33]

Torstein Tollefsen follows the same line of thinking and quotes another important passage from Maximus.

...Nature has the *logos* of being that is common, while hypostasis in addition has the *logos* of being that belongs to itself. The nature, then, has only the *logos* of the species, while the hypostasis is such that it in addition shows a someone.[34]

If the hypostatic *logos* is an integral element of the hypostasis, and it makes the hypostasis absolutely unique, it is impossible to claim that there is no difference between human and non-rational hypostases. Indeed, the Fathers use the term hypostasis, as we have seen, even when they refer to the lower forms of life – such as plants, and even when referring to minerals. However, it would be a gross misinterpretation of the Fathers to draw a conclusion that the hypostasis of a horse is not absolutely unique, but by acquiring its uniqueness through the *free* human *hypostasis,* and to conclude that the Fathers likewise understood the human hypostasis as a "logical notion", that is, as something abstract and impersonal.[35] Quite the opposite is the case. Everything created exists in a hypostatic form, as Törönen himself outlines in a remarkable way, because union and distinction are the very logic of the Trinity and, consequently, of the universe. Nonetheless, it is only due to the human hypostasis—human being is according to Maximus microcosm and priest of creation—more precisely—due to the *very specific form of freedom,* about which I am going to say more later on, by which the human hypostasis is uniquely endowed, that createdness

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[32] Ep. 15 (PG 91), 552BC. Quoted in Törönen, ibid*.,* p. 61.

[33] Zizioulas, p. 22-23.

[34] Th. pol. 26, PG 91, 276a-b. Quoted in The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 128.

[35] However, Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes that it is precisely the image and the likeness to God that makes man, in a mysterious way, different from all other beings. Psalm Inscriptions 1.3 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera [GNO] 5:32, 18-19), and The Beatitudes 6 (GNO 7, 2:143); quoted in: Robert Louis Wilken, 'Biblical Humanism', in Personal Identity in Theological Perspective, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2006, p. 17.

is going to be saved in a hypostatic form. It is this freedom that generally makes human beings different from all other creatures—this freedom is the *logos* of their nature. However, the freedom ought to be manifested in each human being according to the "most particular *logos* of one's own hypostasis", i.e., freedom consists not only of living *kata physin*, but, as I have argued, also of *kata hypostasin*.

This is why I suggest that we should make a distinction between hypostasis and hypostatic *logos* or identity (*ταυτότης*). We find a similar argument in Tollefsen when he writes,

> The Logos Himself is also the centre of each particular because each being is created by, and has its being from, the *logos* of its being *qua* particular... One of the most important lessons to be learned from this is that the particular being of each man has its *logos* from God, which *logos* is the centre of the person's very being.[36]

Hypostasis, I argue, is a broader term and it entails the very special gift of freedom as well as engagement into relationship. Identity, on the other hand, is a mysterious "name", a centre of an absolute uniqueness of each particular human being.[37] It is due to this "name",[38] or hypostatic *logos/identity*, that one is in the first place able to act and to will, and, consequently, to create, a relationship. Maximus himself describes identity as the "constant unchangeability of a rational being in the context of his always active personal perichoretic relation with others".[39] However, he does not seem to apply the concept of "name".

As I have already claimed, the concept of hypostasis cannot be underplayed without the most detrimental implications for the doctrine of the Trinity and for Christology. The Cappadocians sailed into an uncharted sea in order to develop the notion of hypostasis precisely because of the Trinitarian controversy. They could have used some other term, '*logos*' for instance, but they opted for 'hypostasis'. The concept also proved to be crucial in

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36 Ibid., p. 135.

37 "Because human beings are made in the image of God, the human self is a mystery... But, 'who has understood his own mind'? asks Gregory [of Nyssa]. Let those who reflect on the nature of God ask themselves whether they 'know the nature of their own mind'. Basil wrote, 'We are more likely to understand the heavens than ourselves'. We do not know ourselves, said Augustine, for 'there is something of the human person that is unknown even to the spirit of the man which is in him.'" R. L. Wilken, *ibid.,* p. 18.

38 The concept of 'name' is mentioned in Sophrony Sakharov: 'At the last trump every man will receive a new *name* for ever, known only to God and to him that receiveth it' [cf. Rev. 2:17], We shall see Him as He is, (Essex: The Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 2004), p. 84; in Christos Yannaras: 'Therefore we must separately evaluate the importance of the function of the *name*, which alone can signify this uniqueness, which alone can express and reveal a person beyond all concepts and determination.' Elements of Faith; An Introduction to Orthodox Theology, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), p. 30. See also in John Zizioulas: 'Outside the communion of love the person loses its uniqueness and becomes a being like other beings, a 'thing' without absolute 'identity' and 'name', without a face.' Being as Communion, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2004) p. 49.

39 PG 91, 1189A. Quoted in: Petar Jevremović, 'Personology and Ontology in the Works of St Maximus the Confessor', Gledišta 1-6, 1995, p. 142 (in Serbian). Jevremović, for instance, writes: "To be faithful to one's identity (which is the other name for *ταυτότης*) means to be personally (not according to nature or essence) different from the other and the others, vis-à-vis whom and with whom we live... In order to be different one has to be in the first place personal; more precisely, one has to be a person...Every possibility of human existence, at least for St Maximus, is always considered consistently in the light of a high axiological principle *to be personal*, i.e., to be *hypostatic*. Not to be *hypostatic*—or, which is even worse, to be *impersonal*—would represent the utmost fall of human existence." Ibid*.,* p. 142.

the framework of Christology, because the unconfused union of the two natures in Christ is explained as a *hypostatic* union. However, the case that the patristic concept of hypostasis provides an opportunity for the formulation of many different and highly incompatible interpretations proves that even the Fathers themselves did not have a clear enough picture as to what the notion of personhood really entails. What could be the reason for this major drawback of patristic theology? In order to answer this question we need to embark upon a very brief survey of the concept of divine persons in Gregory of Nyssa. For this purpose I shall use Johannes Zachhuber's text *Gregory of Nyssa on Individuals*.

Gregory of Nyssa on divine persons

Zachhuber's argument is elaborate and detailed, so I will therefore present it synoptically. Zachhuber makes a significant distinction between a 'strong theory' and a 'weak theory' of individuality. The former has its roots in Stoics and their concept of a distinctly qualified object, which is also used by Porphyry in an Aristotelian framework; that is, Porphyry endeavoured "to move beyond Aristotle's view of individual predication as predication only 'by accident'".[40] The 'weak theory' belongs to Dexippus who assumed that individuals are distinct because they are *numerically* distinct. In other words, the individual is 'a human being', and not Plato or Socrates.[41]

For the Cappadocians and especially Gregory of Nyssa it was the strong theory that was attractive. This is most obvious in the so-called *Epistle* 38 of Basil, which was most probably written by Gregory of Nyssa. In the *Epistle* 38 Gregory argues that an individual being is individual in so far as it is qualitatively different from other individual beings. In order to be qualitatively distinct an individual needs to possess a *unique set of properties*, argues Gregory.[42]

However, when he was charged for tritheism, Gregory withdraws from his original position and embraces the weak theory of individual, which we find in his work *Ad Graecos*. In *Ad Graecos* Gregory argues that human individuals *do not* differ in their essential predicates, and while the various species of one genus are distinct because in each one of them the genus is modified, we cannot say the same thing for the individuals of one specie. Zachhuber observes,

> Gregory seems willing to accept that the multiplicity of species within one genus implies a multiplicity of sorts in the latter…, but the same, he seems to urge, does not apply to the members of one species. Why not? His answer is that they only differ in 'accidents' (GNO III/ I, 31, 20).[43]

The division of lower species (individuals) differs from those between genus and species, and this is precisely why Gregory argues that this model can be applied to the Trinity. Thus, the Trinity is not a genus with three species, because the distinction between the species is too radical to allow a unity; it is rather a genus with three *lowest* species (*infima spe-*

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40 Zachhuber, p. 5.
41 Zachhuber, p. 5.
42 Ibid., p. 9.
43 Ibid., p. 11.

cies), the distinction between which is solely *accidental*. It seems to be obvious that it is because of the charges for tritheism, or *because he himself was not able to explain the unity of the Trinity if the individual hypostases have full ontological identity*, that Gregory embraces the 'weak theory' of individual. In other words, the only way for Gregory to defend himself from the charges of tritheism was to give up his initial position from the *Epistle* 38, that is, to deny his crucial notion of *hypostasis*.[44]

We have come here to the most fundamental issue: a concept of *hypostasis* as a radical uniqueness cannot be developed as long as we are unable to explain in what way unity is possible between individuals endowed with full ontological identity and absolute otherness. Does identity preclude unity? Does identity exclude personhood? As I have argued before, the absence of such a concept of hypostasis places insurmountable obstacles in front of the theological thought that wants to be faithful to the Orthodox way of theologizing. If the differences between divine hypostases are only accidental, as Gregory seems to contend, the Eastern patristic doctrine of the Trinity, built through an extremely painful process over the ages, simply collapses. We are again at the very beginning of the speculation on the Trinity, and we would need to re-think, for instance, the distinction between the hypostasis of the Son from that of the Father. The same remark is valid for Christology, in particular with reference to Christ's Incarnation. If *hypostasis* is nothing more than accidental, then what do we imply when we reiterate with Chalcedon and Maximus that the unity of the two natures in Christ is a *hypostatic union*? Is it possible to have unity of the two natures which is without confusion and without separation if this unity is not *hypostatic*?

It is necessary now to elucidate in a very synoptic manner those consequences of the strong theory of the individual regarding the ontological constitutive principle of personhood.

On the ontological constitutive principle of personhood

If "freedom is to be other in an absolute sense", i.e., to be like no one else, as Zizioulas claims, can I be absolutely other unless I am also absolutely unique? My absolute otherness is inevitably related to my absolute uniqueness—I am absolutely other in comparison to all other persons precisely because, and only if, I am absolutely unique. If I am, however, absolutely unique, how is my uniqueness manifested? It ought to be manifested through my mode of existence. All men have a common human nature, but they are distinguished among themselves through their modes of existence.

If my uniqueness is manifest through my mode of existence, because I am unique this manifestation ought to be also unique in an absolute sense. That which is absolutely unique is inevitably manifest as total newness. If I am free, this is so because of my absolute otherness; my absolute otherness is predicated on my being absolutely unique. My uniqueness, on the other hand, is manifest in my mode of existence, but from the point of view of other persons it is perceived as an absolute newness. It follows that I am free because I am able to create absolute newness.

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[44] "It would then possibly follow that the Cappadocian approach cannot reply to the charge of tritheism without giving up on some of its central concepts." Ibid., p. 11.

However, my otherness, uniqueness, freedom, and capacity to create things formerly non-existent are given to me only as a potentiality. This means that in order to actualize my otherness and uniqueness, which are my freedom and without which I am not a particular person, I ought to struggle to create things absolutely new, being faithful to the distinctiveness of my personhood. In other words, when I create, it has to be *kata hypostasin*. God creates *ex nihilo*, but man possesses a capacity for infinite creation. Our capacity for infinite creation is what I have here denoted as a power to produce absolute innovation. This is how I understand Berdyaev's claim that "freedom is the power to create out of nothing". When this formula is applied in the context of human creativity, it needs to be amended, so as to assert that freedom is the power to create an absolute newness. It follows that the power to create an absolute newness is what makes human beings different from all other creatures.[45] It also follows that the power to create an absolute newness according to the unrepeatable logic of one's hypostasis is precisely the ontological constitutive principle of personhood. This is crucial if one wishes to become a person and this is why freedom is not only a privilege, but an obligation of each human being, as Berdyaev explains.[46]

Conclusion

By way of a brief conclusion I need to raise a question about Maximus' concept of freedom and personhood. It is important to stress that Maximus works in the specific context of Cyrillian Chalcedonianism, which means that his main concern is to defend the integrity of human *nature*. There is only one person mentioned in the Chalcedonian definition, and that is the person of Christ. This is why Maximus is not defending human personhood. In order to understand his concept of the human *hypostasis* we need to bear in mind the concept of the personal *logos*. However, this notion could hardly respond to a highly demanding call for a freedom conceived as freedom to create absolute newness. We would need a considerable hermeneutical struggle in order to extract this sort of freedom from Maximus' vision of personhood, although this is not altogether an impossible mission. Meanwhile, Berdyaev's argument about a monophysite tendency in the theology of the Fathers, which I have modified, arguing about a tendency towards impersonalism, seems to be valid; and along with it another of Berdyaev's claims appears to be valid: that "Christianity has not yet revealed itself in fullness as a religion of freedom."[47]

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[45] 'The Fathers define the human being with the help of the *imago Dei*, and speak of its capacity to be λογικὸς (rational) as its distinctive characteristic. But they qualify rationality with freedom: the human beings are distinguished from the animals by his or her freedom to take a distance from nature and even from his or her own nature. Freedom, the αὐτοεξούσιον, is not for the Fathers a psychological faculty, but it relates to the acceptance or rejection of everything *given*, including one's own being, and of course God himself.' Communion&Otherness, p. 39.

[46] 'Those who are not free are not needed by God, they do not belong in the divine cosmos. Hence freedom is not a right: it is an obligation. Freedom is a religious virtue.' Berdyaev, p. 159.

[47] "Ours is sometimes called the post-Christian age. But I personally, from what I know of the history of the world and of Christianity, am convinced that Christianity in its true dimensions has never yet been properly grasped by the great mass of people." Sophrony Sakharov, On Prayer, (Tolleshunt Knights: The Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, 1996), p. 61.

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John the Evangelist as the Forerunner of the Word
Reading St Maximus the Confessor's *Ambiguum 21*

Abstract. The paper deals with the *Amb.* 21 of St Maximus the Confessor in which he attempts to resolve the ambiguity posed by St Gregory the Theologian calling John the Evangelist 'the forerunner of the Word'. Maximus' solution is analysed in detail as it provides significant insights into not only his understanding of the iconic nature of the Gospel as it relates to the world to come, but also into the way he develops his theological reasoning, as well as his understanding of the authority of the patristic authors.

Introduction

While interpreting difficult passages in St Gregory the Theologian's works in his *Ambigua* Maximus stumbles across an odd case of the Holy Fathers conflation of the two holy figures. In his *Oration 28* St Gregory refers to John the Evangelist as 'the Forerunner of the Word':

> I hope I may not seem to some of you to be labouring the matter if I say that it may be this that the Word himself was hinting at, when he said that some things, which could not be borne, would at some future time, be borne and made plain. Perhaps it is those things which John, the forerunner of the Word and great voice of truth, affirmed to be beyond the present world's power to contain.[1]

It is quite clear that in the end of this sentence Gregory refers to the concluding words of the Gospel of John: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written" (John 21: 25). What is not clear is why does the Cappadocian father call the Evangelist 'the forerunner of the Word' (ὁ τοῦ Λόγου πρόδρομος). It is well known, and it was known in St Gregory's and St Maximus' time as well, that the 'Forerunner' is a designation reserved for John the Baptist. So how come it is used by Gregory to designate John the Apostle? It might also be added that the other phrase 'great voice of truth' also refers to the actual Forerunner since it alludes to the phrase 'a voice of one crying in the wil-

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[1] Εἰ δὲ μὴ λίαν δοκῶ τισὶ περιττὸς καὶ περίεργος τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐξετάζων, οὐδὲ ἄλλα τινὰ τυχὸν ἢ ταῦτα ἦν , ἃ μὴ δύνασθαι νῦν βασταχθῆναι ὁ Λόγος αὐτὸς ὑπηνίσσετο, ὥς ποτε βασταχθησόμενα καὶ τρανωθησόμενα, καὶ ἃ μηδ' ἂν «αὐτὸν δυνηθῆναι χωρῆσαι τὸν κάτω κόσμον» Ἰωάννης ὁ τοῦ Λόγου πρόδρομος, ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ἀληθείας φωνή, διωρίζετο. *Or.* 28.20 [SC 250: 142D]. I use the English translation provided by Frederick W. Norris, Lionel Wickham, Frederick Williams (eds. and trans.), *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning: The Five Theological Orations of Gregory Nazianzen* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 236, with a small yet significant adjustment. While the phrase ὁ τοῦ Λόγου πρόδρομος has been translated as 'the Word's messenger' in this edition, I translate it literally as 'the forerunner of the Word'.

derness' (φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ), as John the Baptist calls himself in John 1: 23.[2] Has Gregory made a mistake confusing two Johns? Or is he conveying a deeper understanding of the Apostle's foreshadowing of the divine Logos? Through the analysis of Maximus' interpretation of this passage we will try to extract typical traits of Confessors hermeneutics, as well as well as some observations regarding his approach to the authority of his holy predecessors. But before we turn to St Maximus' resolution of this ambiguity, we will focus on the place of this passage in Gregory's *Oration* 28.

God's incomprehensibility

Continuing his polemics with the Eunomians, which he began in his *Oration 27*, in his *Oration 28* St Gregory discusses God's incomprehensibility. Confronting Plato's statement that God is difficult to comprehend but impossible to express, Gregory affirms his well-known position that God is impossible to express and yet even more impossible to comprehend.[3] This goes not only for those who are not versed in exploring the divine things, but also for those who are committed and proficient in *theoria* (θεωρία). In a manner foreshadowing the Areopagite's ascent on the apophatic ladder, Gregory denies God's corporeality and spatiality, adding that Divinity is entirely invisible and cannot be adequately known through bodily images. "No one has yet discovered or ever shall discover what God is in his nature and essence",[4] St Gregory affirms adding that this knowledge will be attained when the God's image in human beings rises up to its prototype and our mind unites with the One with whom it is akin. Knowledge of God which is attainable in this life is but "a small radiance from a great light" (οἷον μεγάλου φωτὸς μικρὸν ἀπαύγασμα).[5]

This "radiance", a limited knowledge which is knowledge in as much it is (in those who possess it) greater than ignorance (of other people), Gregory continues, was familiar to great figures of both Old Testament – such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Elijah, Ezekiel – and the New Testament time – such as are Apostles Peter and Paul. The knowledge of God, as it is discussed in Paul's letter, is related with the words of John the Evangelist. In both cases we are dealing with the unspeakable knowledge, possessed by both apostolic figures. In the case of St Paul, Gregory refers to his inability to express what he witnessed in his ascent to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12: 2-4), as well as to his words from 1 Cor. 13: 9 ("For we know in part, and we prophesy in part"). On the other hand, John testifies to this limitation of our ability to know and express God when he speaks about Christ's deeds as if they were to be written down, all the books would not be contained by the world (Jn. 21: 25). Therefore, the partial knowledge that we are currently given (because we are not able to bear more than that, as we are taught by the Logos himself) is but a radiance

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2   As it has been rightly pointed out by Arthur J. Mason, *The Five Theological Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), 52, n. 9.

3   Ἀλλὰ φράσαι μὲν ἀδύνατον, ὡς ὁ ἐμὸς λόγος, νοῆσαι δὲ ἀδυνατώτερον – *Or*. 28.4 [SC 250: 108A].

4   Θεόν, ὅ τί ποτε μέν ἐστι τὴν φύσιν καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν, οὔτε τις εὗρεν ἀνθρώπων πώποτε, οὔτε μὴ εὕρῃ. *Or*. 28.17.1-2 (SC 250: 134C; *Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning*, 233).

5   *Or*. 28.17 (SC 250: 136A). Norris et al, *Faith Gives Fulness to Reasoning*, 233 translated ἀπαύγασμα as 'a small beam'.

and a small part of the knowledge which, as we are told by the Apostle John whom Gregory here calls 'the Forerunner', cannot be contained in the whole world.

The same issue of God's incomprehensibility which dominates this whole oration is at the very centre of the discussed passage as well. It is in this context that the two apostles who witness this limitation of human knowledge and language are linked and one of them is called the Forerunner of the Word. The central topic of this passage and of the whole oration is very well recognised by St Maximus. Therefore, he develops his interpretation of this peculiar ambiguity around the issue of God's incomprehensibility. It is precisely in this context that John the Evangelist was rightly called, Maximus argues, the Forerunner of the Word.

Shadow, icon and the Truth

Ambiguum 21 represents one out of eight Maximus' Ambigua (15-22) dealing with Gregory's *Oration 28*. The previous one discusses the same paragraph and Gregory's use of three different terms for describing St Paul's out of body experience (progress, ascent, assumption). Therefore, the idea of the mystical ascent into God's unknowability is already present and well introduced. Maximus begins his attempt at resolving the ambiguity caused by Gregory's naming the other John as the 'Forerunner' by referring to two scriptural commandments. First, he points to the commandment of obeying the superiors (Heb. 13: 17) implying the need to comply with the task that is given to him by his friend John of not only examining but also explicating his understanding of Gregory's wisdom. This apology for even daring to write something down represents a common trope present in almost all of his works. And secondly, he states that he is also obliged to study the Scriptures (Jn. 5: 39) and search for the deeper meaning of it. By referring to this other commandment Maximus suggests that the sacral status of St Gregory's writing is not much different from that of the Holy Scripture. Therefore, the commandment to study the Scripture can be understood to refer to both.

The 'scriptural' status of St Gregory's writings is also implied when Maximus' states his profound exegetical principle before he begins his hermeneutical *tour de force*. Contradictions which can sometimes seem present not in the Scripture must be regarded only as superficial. They are only present at the literal level of things, while the truth itself is by its nature not only incorporeal but also "free of the thickness of the words" (μὴ συμπαχυνομένην ταῖς φωναῖς). The only means by which we are able to rise above this literal level of meaning is by resorting to *theoria*.[6] And this is precisely what he does. He organizes his interpretation in several layers or cycles. First, he establishes what I deem to be an iconic relationship between different pairs of things. Second, he establishes what might be regarded as a symbolic relationship between a wider range of realities. In both cases, he

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6 PG 91: 1244B. In addition to Migne's edition I quote the latest edition and the English translation of the work, Maximus the Confessor, *On difficulties in the Church Fathers: the Ambigua*, trans. by Nicholas Constas (Cambridge, Ma and London: Harvard University Press), 422-423. Maximus refers to this principle also later on in PG 91: 1252D; Constas, *On difficulties*, 440-441. Kattan points out that the contradictions are apparent because the Holy Spirit himself is regarded by Maximus as the author of the Scripture. Assaad Kattan, *Verleiblichung und Synergie: Grundzüge der Bibelhermeneutik bei Maximus Confessor* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 219-20.

provides the context in which the title 'Forerunner' can be understood as rightly applied to John the Evangelist.

Maximus begins his spiritual contemplation by establishing an iconic relationship between several pairs of terms in which an icon represents an image of the reality which is already present or is yet to come. These pairs include: lamp and the sun; mind and reality; written Gospel and the eschatological knowledge; the Law and the Christ; Holy people and the Mystery of Christ. Inasmuch the Law represents a shadow of the Gospel which is proclaimed by Christ, the Gospel itself represents an icon of the world to come.[7] Therefore, in the context of iconic relationality Maximus situates another pair, that of John's Gospel and Christ's eschatological presence. As much as a lamp is yet but a temporary source of light compared to the light itself, i.e. the sun, or as holy men are portraying in this life the life of the Word to come, John's Gospel also represents an icon of the eschatological reality. It is for this very reason, Maximus argues, that by calling John 'the Forerunner' Gregory

> "... wanted to suggest [thereby] that the great Evangelist, by means of his Gospel, is the forerunner of a greater and more mystical Word, which he points to, but which cannot be expressed in letters nor uttered with sounds made by a tongue of flesh."[8]

This can be regarded as Maximus' final solution of the ambiguity which he states in a yet more crisp manner later on:

> "For every word given by God to man and written down in this present age is a forerunner of the more perfect Word, which – through that word – is announced to the intellect, spiritually and without writing, and which will be manifested in the age to come, for whereas the written word possesses an indication of the truth in itself, it does not reveal the truth itself, naked and unveiled."[9]

However, he wouldn't have been true to himself and his hermeneutical style had he not offered a broader and complex thought structure which this quite simple solution is founded on. Therefore, in his second exegetical cycle he establishes goes even deeper, providing the iconic relationality with its own foundation, i.e. symbolic relationships which are held between: physical elements, bodily organs, senses, functions of the soul, virtues, types of philosophy and Gospels.

These relations can be best represented in a structured form as follows:

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7 Maximus establishes a qualitative difference between the shadow (σκία) and the icon (εἰκών) suggesting that the Logos is more fully present in the latter. However, as is rightly pointed out by Kattan, this difference cannot be universally applied to all of his writings. Cf. Kattan, *Verleiblichung und Synergie*, 180-2.

8 παραινίξασθαι θέλειν, ὅτιπερ καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ μέγας εὐαγγελιστής, ἐν τῷ κατ᾽ αὐτὸν Εὐαγγελίῳ πρόδρομός ἐστι τοῦ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ μηνυομένου μυστικωτέρου καὶ μείζονος Λόγου, καὶ γράμμασι τυπωθῆναι καὶ φωνῇ γλώσσης σαρκίνης ῥηθῆναι μὴ δυναμένου. *Amb*. 21.3 (PG 91: 1244C; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 422-5).

9 Πᾶς γὰρ λόγος θεόθεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦτον γραφεὶς πρόδρομός ἐστι τοῦ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἀγράφως ἐν πνεύματι κατὰ νοῦν μηνυομένου καὶ ἐς ὕστερον φανησομένου τελεωτέρου Λόγου, ὡς ἀλήθειαν μὲν ἔχων ἑαυτῷ μηνυομένην, οὐ μὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀπερικαλύπτως γυμνὴν δεικνὺς τῆς ἀληθειαν. *Amb*. 21.13 (PG 91: 1252C-1252D; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 440-1). For Maximus understanding of the difference between aeon and time see Vukašin Milićević, "A Contribution to the Understanding of the Mutual Definition of the Aeon and Time in Ambigua 10", *Philotheos* 17 (2017): 66-71.

Physical elements	Bodily organs	Senses	Functions of the soul	Virtues	Types of philosophy	Gospel
Ether	Eyes	Sight	Intellection	Understanding	Theology	John
Air	Ears	Hearing	Rationality	Courage	Natural philosophy	Luke
Water	Nose	Olfaction	Incensive power	Temperance	Practical philosophy	Mark
Earth	Taste	Taste	Desire	Justice	Faith	Matthew
		Touch	Vital force			

Before we dive into explaining these relations it should be noted that Maximus does not establish an explicit relationship between each and every category of the things listed in this table. The relationship is established between the physical elements, Gospels, virtues and the philosophy types, as well as between the bodily organs, senses, soul's functions and the virtues. However, by way of analogy it can be concluded that the same symbolic relationship holds across *all* of the mentioned categories. Maximus also struggles to fit all the elements in the proposed classification in an adequate manner. Hence, touch and the vital force are left floating in the vacuum since there are no corresponding elements in other categories. It should be further noted that the position of a row also signifies its place in the hierarchical ranking. Ether is more superior than air, water and earth, as much as sight is greater than touch, theology than natural philosophy, John's Gospel than any other etc.

How does this symbolic relationship work and what is its purpose? Since he established the *iconic* relationship between the John's Gospel and the Eschaton, he works out the path for understanding this Gospel to represent, as its most superior expression, the knowledge of God attainable in this world. The fourfold structure of the Gospel is perfectly fitting for those who are living in this world which is made of four elements, and whose organs, senses, soul functions and philosophical achievements are structured in a way that maintains this fourfold structure. If the soul functions properly, that is, in accordance with its nature, then it acquires virtues, most superior being understanding, and rises above all forms of philosophy to the contemplation of God, i.e. theology.[10] Symbolic relationship ties the created world together making it both as a whole and in its specific elements an icon of the Eschaton.

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10 *Amb.* 21.8 (PG 91: 1248C, Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 430-1). Maximus also adds that the soul learns to combine these four virtues into two that are more general. So out of understanding and justice the soul fashions wisdom, and from courage and temperance it fashions gentleness. To go even further, the perfected soul draws these two virtues "into the most general virtue of all, by which I mean love" (εἰς τὴν τῶν πασῶν γενικωτάτην ἀρετήν, φημὶ δὲ τὴν ἀγάπην). *Amb.* 21.9 (PG 91: 1249B; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 434-5).

This fourfold structure of the created reality with its own hierarchical relationships is established for one purpose: to provide the basis for the Gospel of John to be understood as both earthly and yet most superior form of knowledge of God. It represents the highest expression of the reality that we currently live in and its final attainment. It corresponds to the nature's highest elements, most noble virtues, most distinguished senses and the highest form of contemplation. As such, it represents the most complete expression of otherwise incomplete knowledge of God which is possible for a human to possess in this age. As an icon it primarily holds referential value, simultaneously revealing and hiding away its prototype.

In addition to this central explanation and in accordance with his exegetical style, Maximus offers interpretations which further expand the central one. First of all, he follows the lead provided by Gregory's calling John 'great voice of truth'. Instead of relating it to John the Baptist, who calls himself 'a voice of one crying in the wilderness' (Jn. 1: 23), Maximus associates it with the voice mixed with thunder and heard by the witnesses of Christ's ascension to Heaven (Jn. 12: 28-30). And to whom does Jesus refer as 'the son of thunder'? Of course, it is John the Apostle and his brother James who are called *Βοανηργές* by the Son of God (Mk. 3: 17). Thunder is precisely that kind of a sound which "induces solely astonishment in those who hear it, without explaining anything clearly, and this is precisely an elementary discourse".[11] This 'elementary discourse' (ὁ στοιχειώδης λόγος) is John's Gospel when compared to the truth which is to be revealed in the future.

On the other hand, Maximus argues that all saints can be called forerunners of Christ, since they prefigured through their lives and deeds. Therefore, each saint can stand in place of another and be called by his name. This interchangeability is evidenced by Jesus himself when he refers to John the Baptist as Elijah, to the Law as Moses, the prophetic books 'Prophets', or when the books of the Scripture are called by the names of their authors. In this manner, John the Baptist becomes metonymy for the entire Old Testament (Law and the Prophets) and John the Apostle becomes a metaphor for the New Testament which in itself is but a forerunner of the future goods.[12]

And finally, Maximus stretches the concept of 'the forerunner' to the maximum length. He claims that even divine Logos can be rightfully called 'the forerunner' of Himself:

> "... consisted with the wisdom of our God-bearing teacher, the Word is called the forerunner of Himself, since He manifests Himself according to the measure of those who receive Him, in both the Old and the New Testament, in which the Word runs ahead of Himself through riddles, words, and figures, by which he leads us to a truth that exists without these things."[13]

In his becoming human the divine Logos has thus made Himself forerunner of His Second coming in which the fulness of truth will be revealed. The mysteries which are now present only as images are conceated until the Second coming because „the world cannot contain

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11 *Amb*. 21.13 (PG 91: 1252C; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 438-41).

12 *Amb*. 21.14-15 (PG 91: 1252D-1253D; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 440-3).

13 ὡς πρόδρομος ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς τοῦ θεοφόρου διδασκάλου προσηγόρευται νῦν, ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀναλόγως τοῖς ὑποδεχομένοις κατά τε τὴν Παλαιὰν κατά τε τὴν Νέαν Διαθήκιν ἐκφαίνων, δι᾿ αἰνιγμάτων τε καὶ φωνῶν καὶ τύπων προτρέχων αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ διὰ τούτων πρὸς τὴν χωρὶς τούτων ἄγων ἀλήθειαν. *Amb*. 21.15 (PG 91: 1253D-1256A; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 444-5).

them" (Jn 21, 25). This is why Gregory uses metonymy to designate by John's name the words which Jesus uttered to his disciples which are an icon and forerunners of the future glory.[14]

Before we make final remarks on St Maximus' interpretation of this ambiguity, we need to explore a possibility that St Gregory's naming of John the Evangelist as the Forerunner of the Word actually was a mistake made by either Gregory or some of those who transcribed his orations.

A slip of a hand or a slip of a tongue?

Might it be that some of those who would later transcribe the manuscripts of Gregory's orations confused two Johns and added an epithet of the forerunner to the wrong one? This possibility seems excluded. In the critical edition of Gregory's orations prepared by Galley alternative reading of this sentence is not offered. Galley even offers an explanation stating that Gregory probably called the Evangelist the Forerunner since he prepared the revelation of the Logos in his Prologue.[15] He adds that Gregory was well aware that John the Baptist is the one usually called the Forerunner and refers to *Or.* 6.7.7-8 [SC 405: 138B]. We might also add that there are other occasions which prove this point [Or. 39.14; SC??], as well as that in one case the title of πρόδρομος is applied to the Holy Spirit, who in the scene of the annunciation (Lk. 1: 31) is perceived as the forerunner of Christ [Or. 31.29; SC???]. Therefore, we may conclude that this part of the oration is original and that this ambiguity was present in the text of the oration from the very beginning.

Is it possible though that Gregory himself made a mistake and confused the two Johns? That this was the case is argued by Andrew Louth:

> "It does not occur to Maximus that Gregory, in the midst of his flights of rhetoric, might have forgotten for a moment to whom he was referring and thus confused the two Johns. No, what Gregory has said must stand, and Maximus is obliged to develop a complex explanation of how John the Evangelist, too, can be called 'the forerunner of the Word, the great voice of the Truth.'"[16]

However, one might object that Gregory carefully revised and prepared his theological orations for publication. Therefore, had it happened that he made a mistake in his oral presentation he would have corrected it afterwards. The fact that Gregory prepared his theological orations before the oral delivery, envisaging them as a whole, and worked on the text is well known. The place of the *Oration* 28 in this publication was subject of a debate among scholars. Although there is a consensus that all of the orations were orally delivered, some scholars believe that this oration was placed between *Or.* 27 and *Or.* 29 later on, in the course of preparation of orations for written publication, and that it was done by Gregory himself. T. Sinko argues that he reworked the exordium of the *Or.* 28, connecting it to what was discussed in *Or.* 27, but failed to do the same for the introductory words of the *Or.* 29.[17] Bernardi

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14 *Amb.* 21.16 (PG 91: 1257A; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 446-7).

15 SC 250: 142, n. 1.

16 Andrew Louth, "St Gregory the Theologian and St Maximus the Confessor: the shaping of tradition", in *The Making and Remaking of Christian Doctrine: Essays in honor of Maurice Wiles*, eds. S. Coakley and D. A. Pailin, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 119-20.

17 Tadeusz Sinko, *De traditione orationum Gregorii Nazianzeni*, Vol. 1, 1917.

agrees with Sinko and also argues that in the reworking of the exordium Gregory incorporated a promulgation of the themes that will be discussed in the *Or.* 29-31 which adds to the presupposition that Gregory himself envisaged the five orations as a whole.[18] What is significant for the topic of this paper is that Bernardi limits Gregory's later editorial work on the oration to a couple of these small interventions in the exordium. However, he also remarks that the oration seems to be too long to have been delivered orally.[19] Norris, on the other hand, points out that *Or.* 31 is of a similar length, but that Bernardi did not question its oral presentation. He also questions other Sinko's and Bernardi's arguments and states that the *Or.* 28 as a whole, together with its exordium, was delivered as it is.[20]

So which conclusions can be drawn from this scholarly discussion? First of all, it may be reasonable to state that Gregory himself prepared the orations for the publications after he delivered them orally. He might have even corrected the text here and there, but it seems that the only potential, later interventions recognized by the scholars are the ones in the exordium of the *Or.* 28. In other words, Gregory might have reworked the introduction of the oration in order to make it more fit to be placed between *Or.* 27 and *Or.* 29. But even if he did so, as Sinko and Bernardi argue, he forgot to do the same for the *Or.* 29. This brings us to the conclusion that even if we accept their proposal that Gregory reworked the texts of the orations, he was not so much careful in doing so. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that the possibility that "in the midst of his flights of rhetoric" Gregory made a mistake which he did not correct later on cannot be excluded. It is worth noting that if it were the case that St Gregory confused the two persons of the same name, this would not have been the first time that he did so. In his *Or.* 24 he quite famously and quite tragically confused St Cyprian of Carthage and St Cyprian of Antioch. However, in this case he most certainly did so out of ignorance and not as a result of a *lapsus linguae*.[21]

Conclusion

What does this story about two Johns mystically united under the same title of 'the forerunner of the Logos' tell us about St Maximus' hermeneutical approach to the writings and authority of St Gregory the Theologian? First of all, as has been noted, we may conclude that St Maximus treats the text of Gregory's orations as divinely inspired in way not that dissimilar from the scriptural texts. He states that in the case of Pseudo-Denys the Areopagite and Gregory the Theologian, Christ himself "became the soul of their souls, manifest to all through all their deeds, words, and thoughts" (ψυχὴν αὐτοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς γεγενημένον καὶ διὰ πάντων ἔργων τε καὶ λόγων καὶ νοημάτων πᾶσιν ἐμφανιζόμενον) and that, therefore, their words were actually "authored, not by them, but by Christ, who by grace has exchanged

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[18] See Noris et al, *Faith gives Fulness*, 77.

[19] Jean Bernardi, *La prédication des pères cappadociens: le prédicateur et son auditoire* (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Montpellier, 1968), 182. For the whole discussion see SC 250: 8-10; Norris et al, *Faith gives Fulness*, 76-8.

[20] Norris et al, *Faith gives Fulness*, 77-8.

[21] SC 284: 9-31, especially 21-4.

places with them" (ἐκείνων μὲν οὐκ εἶναι πεπεῖσθαι τὰ προταθέντα, Χριστοῦ δέ, τοῦ κατὰ χάριν αὐτοῖς ἑαυτὸν ὑπαλλάξαντος).[22] In his *Amb.* 19 he says that Gregory was inspired by the Holy Spirit *in the same fashion* as the prophets, so that his words might be considered also as prophecies.[23] As Constas rightly points out, Maximus sets St Gregory the Theologian alongside King David, the apostle Paul "and even Christ himself".[24]

This leads us to the second point: the exegetical principles applied to the texts of the Holy Scriptures are the same ones applied to the texts of the Holy Fathers. And these don't seem to be different when he is dealing with the interpretation of the liturgical texts and actions as it can be seen in his *Mystagogy*. This approach implies that the possibility of a *lapsus* or a contradiction being contained in the text itself is excluded upfront. The Holy texts cannot contain errors or contradictions. On the other hand, if we form the impression of encountering them, then we are obliged to correct our approach to the text. The error lies within us and not within the text itself. As Aleksandar Đakovac notes:

> "St Maximus' fidelity to the predecessors and the attempt to preserve their authority intact goes far as to bizarre yet brilliant attempts of interpreting even obvious slips of tongue or errors in transcription."[25]

Therefore, anything that resembles an error or a contradiction contained in the text of the Holy Scripture or that of a Holy Father for St Maximus is but a deception that can be cast away with a help of a proper exegetical approach.

Thirdly, we acknowledge that Maximus takes the opportunity provided by the apparent contradictions in the holy text to explore its deeper meaning and thereby develops *his own* theological insights. Text is used as a pretext for his own spiritual contemplation which in its own right becomes largely detached from the text which was its starting point. Starting from the patristic text he develops his own ideas about the ascetical aretology, cosmological iconology and the all-pervading presence of the divine Logos in the Scripture, Cosmos and Eschaton. To quote Đakovac again: „He constantly emphasizes his fidelity to the authorities from the past, repeats their statemets which he then inteprets giving them meaning which the original author most certanly did not have in mind."[26]

Are we than to discard Maximus' attempt at interpreting the words of St Gregory since he neither feels obliged to follow the original intent of the author, nor did the author himself, in this particular case, probably had any particular intent in mistakenly confusing the two Johns? I believe we would be wrong to do so. This case provides us not only with precious insights in understanding the value that the authority of St Gregory posed for St Maximus, but also teaches about the immense potential of the patristic text to influence and inspire our theological thinking even when it is at its weakest point.

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22 *Amb. Th. Prol.* 3 (PG 91: 1033A; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 4-5).

23 *Amb.* 19.2 (PG 91: 1233C; Constas, *On the Difficulties*, 402-403).

24 Constas, *On the Difficulties*, xiv.

25 Александар Ђаковац, *Речено и неизрециво: дискурзивност азматске онтологије у апоретици Светог Максима Исповедника* (Београд: Православни богословски факултет, 2018), 20-1.

26 Ђаковац, *Речено и неизрециво*, 159.

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Arethas of Caesarea's Platonism in His Commentary on the *Categories* of Aristotle: Aristotelianism vs. Platonism in 10th Century Byzantium

1. Introduction

Arethas (850-944 A.D.), Archbishop of Caesarea during the second half of the 10th century, occupies a place of primary importance in the history of the transmission of classical philosophy,[1] as it was he who, in his personal *scriptorium*, transcribed the philosophical works of Plato and Aristotle that have been basic to the composition of his respective critical texts. To him belongs the historical merit of having sought the preservation of the Platonic *corpus*, at a time when philosophical activity was not widespread.[2] His contribution to our knowledge of Plato is traced to the manuscript *Bodleianus Clarke* 39 (B), which was copied by John "Calligrapher" in 895 A.D. by order of Arethas and was acquired in 1801 by E. D. Clarke, at the Monastery of Saint John on Patmos. The quality of the condition reveals a costly investment,[3] which attests to the esteem that Plato enjoyed.

In addition to this philological work, Arethas gave us a series of philosophical texts that specifically address the problem of *universalia* and the Platonic theory of Ideas. On

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[1] A. Bravo García, "Arethas, semblanza de un erudito bizantino," *Erytheia* 6(1985), 241-254; P. Eleuteri, "La filosofia" in: G. Cambiano, (dir.), *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica II. La ricezione e l'attualizzazione del testo*,.Salerno Editrice, Roma, 1995, 453

[2] J. Duffy, "The Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos" in K. Ierodiakonou (ed.), *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, 144. The Greek scholar praises the philological work of Arethas: "lovers of Plato will always be grateful to the distinguished Byzantine churchman who, when still only a deacon, spent a considerable sum of money to have a complete copy of Plato's works made in the waning years of the ninth century."

[3] N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*. Revised Edition, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, London, 2003, 154, gives the detail that the cost amounted to eight pieces of gold, in which he added another 13 for the copyist. The manuscript contains 24 Platonic dialogues, i.e. all the important dialogues except for the Republic, Leges, and Timaeus. It is likely that that the manuscript constituted the first volume of a complete edition of Plato. Along with Parisinus gr. 1807 (A) of the so-called "philosophical Collection," which contains copies of Platonic commentators such as Proclus, Damascenus, and Olimpiodorus, the Bodleianus Clarke 39 (B) was formed according to the tetralogy attested to by Diogenes Laertius and his text was carefully reviewed before it was recopied in two volumes by Photius and in three volumes by Arethas. Cfr. J. Irigoin, *Tradition et critique des textes grecs, Les Belles Lettres*. Paris, 1997, 87-88.

the latter, Arethas personally pronounced in his scholia to the *Epitome Doctrinae Platonicae* of Alcinous; and secondarily regarding his Alexandrine sources in both philosophical commentaries of great technical rigor, which has been transmitted to us under his name: the first philosophical commentary is the *Categories* of Aristotle, and the other one is the *Isagoge* of Porphyrius. In both commentaries, he bears witness to a vast knowledge of Neoplatonist commentary of Late Antiquity, especially those of the Alexandrian school of the sixth century.

Although in its dogmatic work there are allusions to certain conceptualizations of universals,[4] they do not offer any interest as regards the interpretation of Plato's theory of Ideas. Consequently, our study of the reception of Plato's theory of Ideas in Arethas is based on the above three documents: the scholia to the *Epitome Doctrinae Platonicae* which, without constituting a comment, allows us to know the personal opinion of Arethas on the subject, and the scholia to the *Categories* and the *Isagoge* which, even if they are characterized by a marked impersonal tone, perhaps they offer a more accurate analysis and greater depth than any other Byzantine author who wrote on the subject.

2. Platonism in Arethas's Commentary on the Categories of Aristotle
2.1. Character and Sources

The scholia of Arethas to the *Categories* are preserved in a single manuscript, *Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 35*. We face a conceptually dense text, although composed of sections that by their median extension, facilitate reading. The commentary of Arethas, as found in the *Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus 35*,[5] does not extend to the entire work of the *Categories*, but it only goes up until *Categories* 4b 17-18,[6] a factor that suggests, along with the content of the work, that the commentary to the *Categories* is less than that which the author dedicated to the *Isagoge* of Porphyrius.

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4 The dogmatic oeuvre of Arethas was published under *Arethae Scripta Minora*. vol. I. Recensuit L. G. Westerink, (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana) Teubner, Leipzig, 1968, and *Arethae Scripta Minora*. vol. II. Recensuit L. G. Westerink, (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana) Teubner, Leipzig, 1972; L. G. Benakis, "Ἡ γένεση τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς στὸν Ἀριστοτέλη καὶ στὴν χριστιανικὴ σκέψη. Μὲ ἀφορμὴ ἕνα κείμενο τοῦ Ἀρέθα," *Φιλοσοφία* 2(1974), 327-336, here at 335, has drawn attention to Arethas's use of the Christian reformulation of the Stoic "σπερματικοὶ λόγοι" carried out by Gregory of Nyssa.

5 Cfr. some important critiques to the edition of M. Share in P. Kotzia Panteli, "M. Share, Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 35): A Critical Edition [The Academy of Athens: Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi – Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina, 1] Athens-Paris-Bruxelles, 1994, xvi+293," Ἑλληνικά 46(1996), 396-410, and, especially in R. B. Tood, "M. Share, Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's *Categories* (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 35): a Critical Edition. Bruxelles: Editions Ousia, 1994. Xvi, 293. ISBN 2-870060-046-1", *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 12 (1995).

6 R. B. Tood, "M. Share, Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's *Isagoge* and Aristotle's Categories (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 35): a Critical Edition. Bruxelles: Editions Ousia, 1994. xvi, 293. ISBN 2-870060046-1m, *op. cit*., 2: "the abrupt conclusion to the Categories scholia at the start of ch. 6 certainly suggests use of an already truncated source."

Arethas bases his commentary on the comments of the Alexandrian philosophers devoted to the *Categories*, which results in the overall character of the text being very technical, without any examination of incidental valuations. This lack of originality can be seen in the extent to which its author is known for the importance of their copies of the Platonic *corpus*, and by the lighthearted comments that Arethas wrote in the margins of some Platonic dialogues.[7] In particular, Arethas is based on Ammonius, Elias, and David,[8] but also on Plato himself, Alexander of Aphrodisias, the stoic Chrysippus, and authors of a platonizing character, such as Plotinus, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Simplicius, and Olympiodorus.[9]

Considering the citation of such authors and, in particular, the large number of fragments taken directly from the commentary of Simplicius into the *Categories*, it might well seem that Arethas proposes to solve the Aristotelian *aporia* in a Platonic sense; however, the steps by which he includes the idea that Aristotle does not contradict or propose topics in vain do not allow us to reach such a conclusion.[10] Therefore, we see that Arethas writes his scholia to the *Categories* with the aim of showing what problems are raised, and which of the given solutions are not sufficient, without being resolved. In this sense, we can say that Arethas sets a significant distance between the Aristotelian text and its detailed analysis, even if he demonstrates a precise and profound knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy, he takes an objective approach that only uses technical means, mainly analysis and a comparison between the thesis of different authors. However, when looking at the fragments of the ancient commentators on which Arethas himself is based (and that, in many cases, he literally copies) his own commentary reveals a platonizing focus. This can be seen in the link between the ten Aristotelian categories and the five largest Platonic genres; the references to participation, to the double condition of the universal, the discussion about the distinction between the first and second substance, the allusion to the triple Alexandrian classification of the universal, the reference to the divine substance, the declared agreement between Plato and Aristotle, etc.

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7   N. G. WIilson, *Scholars of Byzantium. Revised Edition*, *op. cit.*, 123 recalls the importance of some commentaries copied by Arethas and are not found in any other codex. On the other hand, he informs us about the issues that Arethas is interested in. These issues refer to the criticism of the Greek gods by Socrates in his Apologia; to the homosexual connotation of Charmides 155d; and to his criticism of Socrates in the passage 159c, for playing tricks with reasoning, like a sophist. However, Arethas's openness to classical and pagan literature makes the scholar (ibidem, p. 120) qualify Arethas's talent as "liberal and tolerant."

8   M. Rashed, "Les marginalia d'Aréthas, Ibn al-Ṭayyib et les dernières gloses alexandrines à l'Organon," IDEM (ed.), *L'héritage aristotélicien. Textes in- édits de l'Antiquité, Les Belles Lettres*. Paris, 2007, 343, after a clever analysis, the scholar concludes his study by demonstrating the argument that Arethas was based on a lost commentary of the categories by David of Alexandria that it had served also as source to Ibn al Ṭayyib. About the dependence of David of Alexandria on the commentaries of Vaticanus Urbinas gr. 35 cfr. L. G. Benakis, "Δαβὶδ ὁ Ἀρμένιος καὶ ἡ παρουσία του στὰ ἔργα τῶν Βυζαντινῶν σχολιαστῶν τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους," IDEM, *Βυζαντινή φιλοσοφία. Κείμενα καὶ μελέτες. Texts and Studies on Byzantine Philosophy*. Athens, 2002, 307.

9   Cfr. the references to Arethas *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας*, ed. M. Share (1994); to Plato, 160, 163, 211; to Alexander of Aphrodisias, 159, 200, 210, 219; to Chrysippus, 206; to Plotinus, 155; to Iamblichus, 140, 146, 147, 191; to Syrianus, 210.

10 Ibid 137, 140, 145, 187.

2.2. The Triple Neoplatonic Ontology
as a Unitary Objective of the Categories

The commentary begins with an introduction regarding the Aristotelian authorship of the *Categories* and its sole purpose. For reasons of style and content, Arethas mostly ends with the question of the objective of the *Categories*, which he refers precisely with the following words:

τὸν σκοπὸν εἴπωμεν τῶν Κατηγοριῶν περὶ φωνῶν ἁπλῶν σημαινουσῶν ἁπλᾶ πράγματα διὰ μέσου ἁπλῶν νοημάτων τῶν κατὰ τὴν πρώτην θέσιν.[11]

Arethas insists that the study of the *Categories* is directed at a single target, even though the Aristotelian semantics are structured in three levels representing the voices (φωναί), concepts (νοήματα), and things (πράγματα). We should note that Arethas speaks in the first person and, noting a single target comprising the three levels of Aristotelian semantics, he is critically opposed to a) Alexander of Aphrodisias and Eustace, who believed that the target was reduced to the grammatical study of the voices; b) to Porphyry, who would have restricted the aim to the epistemological study of concepts, and, c) finally, to Herminus, who considered that the objective corresponds to the metaphysical study of reality. Arethas seems to consider it a success, as well as a duty, to recognize a single objective despite the triple theoretical structure of the *Categories*. This is reflected in an ironic allusion to Iamblichus, in which he refers to it as a counterexample for having recognized three objectives in each of the Platonic dialogues.[12]

In another passage in which Arethas reiterates the unity of the *Categories*, he shows that what corresponds to the three levels of classical semantics is only three types of beings; to voices, concepts, and things that correspond respectively to a place, on which they are founded. This triple semantic classification of beings and of their respective foundations constitute a reference to the triple universal classification of the Alexandrian school, which is followed by Olympiodorus and Elias:

ὥστε οὐ τριττὸς ὁ σκοπός, κἂν εἰ τὰ ὄντα τριττά, φωναί φημι καὶ πράγματα καὶ νοήματα· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖ ταῦτα ἀλλήλοις, ἵνα καὶ οἱ σκοποὶ ὀνόματι μόνον τρεῖς ὦσι, πράγματα δὲ εἷς· οὔτε γὰρ πᾶσα φωνὴ νόημα ἔχει, διὰ τὰς ἀσήμους φωνάς, οὐδὲ πᾶν νόημα πρᾶγμα, διὰ τὸ σκινδαψὸς καὶ τραγέλαφος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ κατὰ τὰς αἰτίας· φωνῶν μὲν γὰρ ψυχή, νοῦς δὲ νοημάτων, τῶν πραγμάτων δὲ ὁ θεός. ἅπερ τρία, θεός, νοῦς, ψυχή, εἰ καὶ αὐτοπαράγωγά ἐστι καὶ ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις διὰ τοῦτο λέγονται, ὅμως διαφέρουσι καὶ κατὰ τὸ αὐτοπαράγωγον· θεὸς μὲν γὰρ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἔχει τὸ εἶναι, νοῦς δὲ καὶ ψυχὴ οὐκ ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὲν νοῦς ἀκίνητος, ἡ δὲ ψυχὴ αὐτοκίνητος.[13]

The objective is unique despite the fact that Arethas speaks of three different realities; not only does he presuppose an objective relationship between them, but also the notion of a reality that is expressed by these three elements. However, the functions of

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[11] Ibid, 134, 25-27. According to the semantics of Porphyry, Aristotle notes categories beyond the scope of the study of the terms of the second imposition (δευτέρα θέσις), which Aristotle studies in the *De Interpretatione*.

[12] The opposition to the authors that recognize only one of the semantic levels is found *in Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 214, 133, 1-26. The reference to Iamblichus, ibid. 134, 24.

[13] The justification for translating "Intellect" and "Soul" with a capital letter is found in the fact that Arethas refers to them, as if he refers to God, as "*ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις*."

each one of these, as well as the hierarchical order that exists between them, are well defined. God is above Intellect and Soul, this order corresponds to the functions of each one of the hypostases: God is the foundation of things in their subsistence (*πραγμάτων ὡς ὑφεστώτων*); Intellect is the foundation of the concepts in terms of its conception (*νοημάτων ὡς νοουμένων*); and Soul is the foundation of the voices in their pronunciation (*φωνῶν ὡς ἐκφωνευμένων*).[14]

In conclusion, we see that Arethas, according to the Alexandrian Neoplatonic commentators, in a positive manner resolves one of the issues that in Aristotle remained unresolved, namely the question of whether the categories are reduced to mere forms of understanding or whether, on the contrary, they also determine the essence of things, as happens with the Platonic Ideas. Indeed, having the *categories* as an object of the common study of things, concepts, and voices, it highlights the close correlation between the three terms, so that it can be said that, from this Neoplatonic point of view, the categories are not reduced to pure concepts of understanding, but they are, in turn, an essential determination of reality, constituting the key to a true ontology.[15]

2.3. The Neoplatonic Solution
to the Aristotelian Contradictory Adjectivization of Substance

Arethas, in accordance with Olympiodorus[16], tries to explain with what two criteria the contradiction that Aristotle supposes can be solved by the fact that, in the writings of the *Logic*, he denominates "first" the individual substance and "second" the universal, doing the opposite in *Metaphysica*. He adopts a Platonic point of view, if the criterion of the objective being has to prevail over that of the subjective being. The contradiction of Aristotle is only apparent (*οὐ περιπίπτει ἀντιφάσει*) and we can say that both the one and the other is true: "*ἄμφω δ'ἀληθῆ.*"[17] The different adjectivization of the universal and of the individual substance is ought to the use of two different criteria. The first one, employed in the *Metaphysics*, is the priority of nature (*τῇ φύσει*) and the other one, employed in the *Categories*, is the temporal advance concerning our knowledge (*τῷ χρόνῳ, πρὸς ὑμᾶς*). The universal itself is stronger, more robust and consistent than the severable substances to the same extent that the eternal is in relation to the corruptible.

On the other hand, if we adopt the criterion of the process of knowledge, which implies the temporal dimension of the abstract process (*τὴν ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως*) through which we return from the image of several homonymous beings to the universal, and which rests on the ease with which the object is known (*εἰσαγωγικότερον*), we see that the first are the divisible substances, once the universal is generated later (*ὑστερογενῆ*), and that there is therefore no contradiction between the two approaches, but different results depending on whether the perspective is objective or subjective:

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14 Ibid, § 214, p. 135, 23-24.

15 Ibid, § 237, p. 164, 13-16.

16 Olympiodorus, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. A. Busse (1902), 23-24.

17 *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 214, 137, 22.

πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ τῇ φύσει τὰ καθόλου, τῷ χρόνῳ δὲ ἔμπαλιν· θεασάμενοι γὰρ τὰ καθ᾽ ἕκαστα, ὀψέ ποτε τὰ καθόλου προβαλλόμεθα, ἢ καὶ ὅτι τὴν καθόλου <οὐ> τὴν αὐτὴν λαμβάνει ἐνταῦθα καὶ τῇ *Μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ* καὶ τῇ *Ἀποδεικτικῇ*, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνταῦθα μὲν τὴν ἐξ ἀφαιρέσεως καὶ ὑστερογενῆ, διὸ καὶ ἐπαινεῖ τὴν πρώτην, ἡ γὰρ Δευτέρα τῇ ἐπινοίᾳ, ἐν δὲ τῇ *Ἀποδεικτικῇ* καὶ τῇ *Μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ* τὴν κυρίως οὐσίαν, τὴν νοεράν, ἢ καὶ δευτέρα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ὥστε οὐ περιπίπτει ἀντιφάσει.[18]

Later, Arethas again raises the issue of the criteria by which the status of "first" or "second" applies to the substance, but this time he follows Philoponus. Truly, Arethas records that, in the *Categories*, Aristotle refers to the universal (καθόλου) as the second substance, i.e. a secondary entity if we compare that to the ontological priority that is represented by the individual or indivisible substance (ἄτομον); but then Arethas notices that Aristotle proceeds without it being overlooked that the qualification of "second" follows the *ordo cognoscendi* (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς τάξιν).[19] When the Neoplatonic authors interpret the *Categories*, they recognize that universal is something conceptual (ἐννοηματικοῦ καθόλου) and, in the best case, it is somewhat later regarding the first ssubstance (τὸ δὲ ζῷον τὸ καθόλου ἢ οὐδέν ἐστιν ἢ ὕστερον).[20] Arethas extracts the passages of the *Physics*, of *De caelo*, and of the *Metaphysics* in which Aristotle states, against the logical and epistemological approach that predominates in the *Categories*, that the intelligible substance (νοητὴν οὐσίαν) is stronger than the composite one.[21] What happens here in the field of reality has its correspondence in knowledge, and thus Arethas explains that, on the one hand, the demonstration is stronger than the perception (κρείττων δ᾽ ἡ ἀπόδειξις τῆς αἰσθήσεως) and, on the other hand, the objects of science, by being discursive, are more consistent than the perceived ones (κρείττω ἄρα καὶ τὰ ἐπιστητὰ διανοητὰ ὄντα, τῶν αἰσθητῶν); in this sense, we can say that the discursive substance is more consistent (διανοητήν) than the sensitive substance (αἰσθητῆς).[22]

2.4. The Triple Alexandrian Universal Classification and the Division of the Substance

Facing the internal problems that the theory of the Aristotelian categories present, Arethas posits three points to solve: 1) the priority of substance is given by nature (φύσει), as opposed to knowledge, and self-sufficiency (τὸ αὐθυπόστατον), as opposed to what remains of another entity; 2) the substance is one, as opposed to the multiplicity of accidents; 3) One precedes Multiplicity. From these principles, it is necessary to realize the six strands (ἑξαχῶς) in which substance is named; we can represent its divisions schematically as follows:[23]

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18 Ibid., § 214, 137, 24-31.

19 Ibid., § 239, 169, 25-26.

20 Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentaries*, ed. A. Busse (1885), 36, 4-21; cfr. Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, 169, 33-34.

21 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, 170, 1-2: "οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης καὶ νοητὴν οὐσίαν κρείττω τῶν συνθέτων."

22 Ibid., § 239, 10, 2-20.

23 In brackets appear in Latin numbers the six types of substance that Arethas recognizes. Cfr. Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, 169, 1-3.

ἡ οὐσία

πᾶν ὄν (I)   ἡ μὴ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ φύσις   ἄλλη περιεκτικὴ (VI)

τῆς συνθέτου καὶ μερικῆς

ἁπλῆ   σύνθετος

κρείττων (II) χείρων (III)   ἑαυτὴν   σχετικὴ   ἁπλῆ   σύνθετος

τῆς συνθέτου   τῆς συνθέτου καθ'   γενικωτάτη   εἰδικὴ

θεὸς   εἶδος   (IV)   (V)

νοῦς   ὕλη   Σωκράτης   κρείττων   χείρων

ψυχὴ   Ξάνθος   Ἄργος   τῆς συνθέτου   τῆς συνθέτου

ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς

τὶς   τὶς κύων

ἄνθρωπος τὶς ἵππος

πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν   ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς

Figure 1

The substance is given in three modes: 1) as a general holistic being (πᾶν ὄν); 2) as that which is not found in a subject (ἡ μὴ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ φύσις) in the sense that in that, as support and substrate, are found the accidents; 3) as that which contains the substantial composition of matter and form (περιεκτικὴ τῆς συνθέτου καὶ μερικῆς).

    First, the notion of the substance as a general being (I) is only mentioned by name, without going into details. Of the substance that is not given in any subject, the simple section is explained at first (ἁπλή). Within it, it appears a worthy standard of review; this is the strongest being (κρείττων) or a weaker (χείρων) compound (τῆς συνθέτου), which is substantially constituted by the ontological principles of matter (ὕλη) and species (εἶδος), i. e., the σύνολον by which is means the first substance. What is significant is that this type of substance, thus constituted, asserts as a term of reference from which encrypt the consistency of being with which to discern other types of substances. Thus, soul (ψυχή), intellect (νοῦς), and God (θεός) are the types of simple substance that are not in a subject and are more

consistent (II) than a substance first to use, composed of Matter and Form. All three are self-produced hypostases (αἱ τρεῖς ἀρχικαὶ ὑποστάσεις ὡς αὐτοπαράγωγοι), although – as Arethas explains - God alone is self-produced in the proper sense, since the other two hypostases are generated by the hypostasis of God. Unlike them, the substantial components of lower consistency (III) that the first substance uses is matter (ὕλη) and species (εἶδος). This ontological deficiency is due to the fact that both the one and the other subsist by the compound, although not in this, in the manner of accidents, being assumed only because of it, in an instrumental way, as in the art of equestrian it is used the brake or the bridle, or in the art of navigation it is to be used in the construction of boats.[24]

Second, it is the composite section (σύνθετος) of the substance that does not occur in a subject. Within it the criterion of self-existence that provides order, on the one hand, under the class of what is in itself and for itself (καθ' ἑαυτήν) (IV) substances first used, of which the example of man is given, referred to by different proper names (Σωκράτης, Ξάνθος, Ἄργος); and, on the other hand, under the relational class (σχετική) (V), classify these same substances first to use, but stripped of their concrete selfhood and elevated one degree in the generality of particular indeterminacies (τις ἄνθρωπος, τις ἵππος, τίς κύων).

Now, if in the case of the simple substance that is not in a subject we have already had the opportunity to refer to pure, immaterial substances i. e., immaterial, of greater consistency than the first substance; if, on the other hand, we have seen how it has, in turn, greater ontological consistency than the substantial coprinciples of Matter and Species, the latter acting as Form; and if, finally, we have seen how it is possible that the consideration of the first substance from the category of relation supposes in that one an abstraction that rises a degree in terms of generality (τίς), with this, the most decisive has not been said about the Idea, addressed here from the terms of the substance and the universal. Indeed, in addition to the overall substance (which is not in a subject), we have thirdly, that which is referred to under the term "content of the compound and divisible" (περιεκτικὴ τῆς συνθέτου καὶ μερικῆς) (VI). The two content objects, both the divisible and the compound, are one, namely the first substance. It is said that it is a compound substance (συνθέτου) of matter and form, and, moreover, that it is divisible (μερικῆς), a property that corresponds to the matter since it, in the case of raw material, has first determination and quantification, and in the case of the qualified subject, given its full extent, it is capable of being divided. As the substance is not in a subject, the substance content is also divided into single (ἁπλῆ) and compound (σύνθετος). The simplicity is that in ontological terms as to generality, i.e, a term that acts as a last genre, and therefore, as a more general genre; in this sense referred to as the "more general" (γενικωτάτη). Meanwhile, the composite of the continent substance is referred to as "special" (εἰδική); this means that, as opposed to being more general, it occupies an intermediate position of ontological intention that, when acting as a genre, since there is always a larger and less intense genre that contains it as such a species.

The continent substance, regardless of which, is simple and very general or special and composite and is divided, in terms of ontological consistency, into two expressions. The first

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24 Ibid., § 239, 168, 24-25: "ἡγεῖται γὰρ ταῦτα τῆς συνθέτου ὡς δι' αὐτὴν παραληφθέντα, ὡς χαλινοποιητικὴ ἱππικῆς καὶ ναυπηγικὴ κυβερνητικῆς."

is stronger (κρείττων) than the first substance and includes universal multiplicity (πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν) and what exists in multiplicity (ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς). The second expression is the one that is weaker (χείρων) than the first substance; in this case, without suffering further specifications, it understands only the universal that is later than the multiplicity (ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς). We see how in the study of the substance is included the triple Alexandrian universal classification.[25] This is important as it appears clear how the universal is directly related to substance (οὐσία) and, ultimately, to being; moreover, we draw attention to the fact that here the universal is considered stronger in multiplicity that each of the first substances that make it up, for the universal in the multiplicity of the Alexandrian gradation (ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς) corresponds to the Aristotelian μορφή. Such *μορφή* is considered the *περιεκτική* class of *οὐσία* in the *Categories*, but without being properly substance in the sense in which, as Arethas himself informs us it is said of εἶδος and ὕλη, which are, together with the compound of both, substances. It is seen, therefore, that while in *Categories* Aristotle avoids referring to *μορφή* as *οὐσία*, giving thereby ontological priority to the first substance over the second substance, the interpretation of Elias and David that Arethas brings up, expressly affirms the opposite once it classifies as universal in multiplicity as more solid than the compound of form and matter, i.e., than the first substance. This is a case where it can be seen how "Aristotelian" philosophy is forced to accommodate an explicitly "Neoplatonic" thesis as far as is allowed by the limit that, in some sense, is to be followed and is recognized as "Aristotelian." The reference to the *περιεκτικὴ οὐσία* of the Alexandrians that Arethas brings up in his commentary has a Neoplatonic value not only is it evidenced by considering more ontologically consistent the universal *ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς* than the first substance, but also by the Neoplatonic origin of the term "*περιεκτική*," which does not appear in Aristotle. In a more general sense, we must also draw attention to the simple fact that Arethas uses the classification of Neoplatonic commentators of Alexandria, as this attests to the validation that the doctrines of this school retained within the Byzantine philosophical culture.

For more detail, consider the exact way Arethas, following Elias,[26] refers to the explanation of the continent substance, which coincides with the concept of the universal itself, free of determinations:

ἔστι δέ τις καὶ ἄλλη οὐσία παρὰ ταύτας, ἥτις συνθέτου καὶ μερικῆς περιεκτική, ὡς ἡ εἰδικὴ καὶ γενική· σιωπάσθω γὰρ ἡ διαφορὰ νῦν, μήτε κυρίως περιεκτικὴ οὖσα τῆς συνθέτου (οὐ γὰρ λέγεται ὁ Σωκράτης λογικότης), μήτε γνώριμος οὖσα τῷ πολλῷ ἀνθρώπῳ· οὗτος γὰρ λογικὸν ζῷον οἶδεν, οὐ λογικότητα, καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ περιεκτικὴ τῆς συνθέτου δύναται καὶ ἁπλῆ εἶναι ὅταν γενικωτάτη ᾖ, καὶ σύνθετος ὅταν εἰδική,

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25 P. Kotzia Panteli, M. Share, *Arethas of Caesarea's Scholia on Porphyry's Isagoge and Aristotle's Categories (Codex Vaticanus Urbinas 35): A Critical Edition* [The Academy of Athens: Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi–Commentaria in Aristotelem Byzantina, 1] Athens-Paris-Bruxelles 1994, xvi+293, 409-410 had already drawn attention to the presence of the triple Alexandrian universal classification in the commentary of Arethas, in particular the interpretation of Platonic Ideas as universal *πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν*. It must therefore not come as a surprise, as we have seen by studying M. Rashed, that the main source of Arethas is none other than David of Alexandria. More importantly, it highlights the fact that Arethas uses its source without adding any critical commentary against most ontological solidity that has that kind of universal respect to the first substances.
26 Elias, *Eliae (olim Davidis) in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, ed. A. BUSSE (1900), 162, 28-31; and ibidem, 36-163.

καὶ κρείττων τῆς συνθέτου ὅταν πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἢ ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς ἢ καὶ χείρων ὅταν ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς.**27**

Having explained the reference to the triple classification of the Alexandrian universal, we must notice the following aspects of the above passage. Once it is clear that the term "περιεκτικὴ οὐσία" refers to free universal determinations, such as, e.g., the abstract quality of rational being or "rationality,"**28** there are two immediate consequences: 1) that it is not properly continent (μήτε κυρίως περιεκτική) of the compound and, 2) it is not known (μήτε γνώριμος). The first one is said primarily in a grammatical or logical sense, as derived from the argument that, in fact, it is not called "the rationality of Socrates" (οὐ γὰρ λέγεται ὁ Σωκράτης λογικότης). As we have seen, however, as the goal of the study of the *Categories* is threefold and refers to both the concepts and the voices as also to the things, the sense is ontological. The fact that the continent is not commonly known as substance by ordinary mortals is also evident from the same linguistic fact; therefore, in order to be referred to man, it is referred to as "rational animal" and not "animal rationality" (λογικὸν ζῷον οἶδεν, οὐ λογικότητα).

Arethas goes on to explain that of the six types contained in the study of substance, the *Categories* contains only two: 1) the first substance, i.e., the compound of matter and form, and then only to the extent that it is not considered as reality (οὐ περὶ τῆς συνθέτου ὡς πράγματος), which in this case is the subject of physiology (φυσιολογίας), but as a private entity (ὡς μερικῆς), opposite to the corresponding universal entity, e.g., a man or "man" generically used as a paradigm.**29** This relational form (σχετική) that considers the substance in which a particular term is said in relation to the whole universal, is the object of the dialectic (διαλεκτική) since unlike physiology, it is not about nature, but about the relations of beings.**30**

Secondly, *Categories* relate to the continent substance, i.e., which, dividing only in differences of genus and species and not in differences, contains the logically divisible compound. In addition to remembering what has already been said about the continent, namely that it is a substance that is capable of being divided on the one hand, in simple and compound, and, on the other hand, in stronger and weaker than the degree of consistency the represented by the divisible compound, Arethas, also following Elias, adds new information about their own determinations of the universal, "περὶ τῆς περιεκτικῆς ταύτης, ἣν καὶ εἰς πρώτην διαιρεῖ καὶ δευτέραν. αὕτη δὲ οὐδὲ ὑπὸ τὴν διαίρεσιν πέπτωκεν, ἅτε δὲ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς διῃρημένοις σκέλεσιν θεωρουμένη καὶ μὴ δυναμένη ἐν ἑνὶ σκέλει ἀντιδιαιρεθῆναι."**31**

About this last characterization, we have to emphasize the fact that the continent substance, i.e., the universal that was already subject to the determinations of the division, on the one hand simple and compound and moreover, stronger and weaker than the compound,

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27 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, ed. M. Share (1994), 168, 27 – 169, 1.

28 The translation of λογικότης as "logic," although correct in terms of an abstract noun, is burdened with the homonym that maintains respect to logic "feminine singular adjective and about the name of science or discipline of logic, although it is a good use that in the latter case is distinguished from previous begin with a capital letter. to avoid homonymy, we turn to the corresponding Latin root, i.e., to "rationality."

29 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, 168, 8-9: "διὸ παραδείγματι χρῆται τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ τινὶ ἵππῳ, οὐ Σωκράτει οὐδὲ Ξάνθῳ."

30 Ibid., § 239, 169, 14-15: "αὕτη [ἡ διαλεκτική] γὰρ οὐ τὰς φύσεις, ἀλλὰ τὰς σχέσεις τῶν οὐσιῶν ζητεῖ."
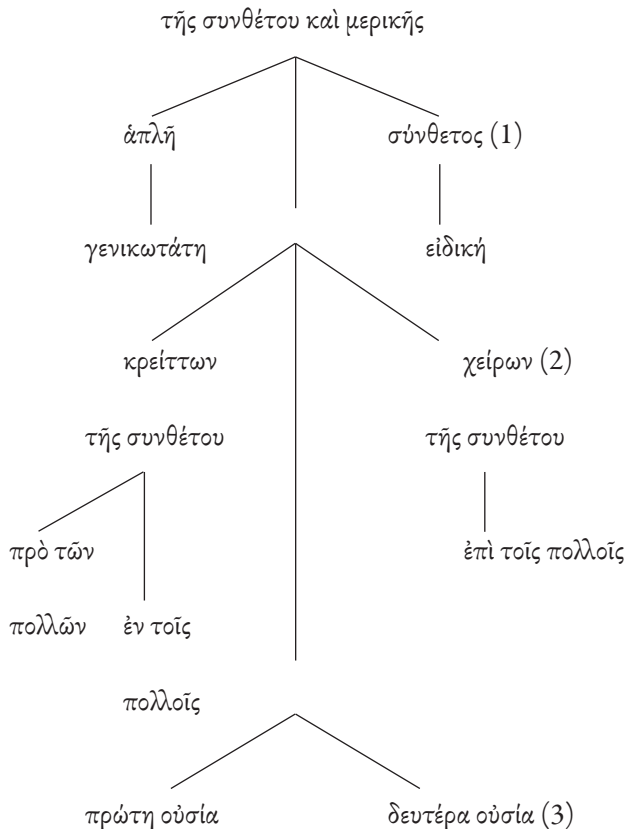
31 Elias, *Eliae (olim Davidis) in Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, ed. A. Busse (1900), p. 162, 34 - 163, 3.

is also divided into first and second substances. It is true that though implicitly, this third determination is a supposed dichotomy that was in fact considered stronger or weaker than the compound substance continent. This is because, in the strongest section, comprising the universal *πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν* and the universal *ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς*, terms that represent respectively the Idea, Neoplatonic and Aristotelian form, both in categories considered by Aristotle as secondary substances; meanwhile, in the "weaker than the compound" section of the continent substance, the universal is understood as *ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς*. Now, as for both sections, the opposition term as well as the limit that defines both, is the compound, regardless of whether it is divisible - since, even in this case, the divisible compound, although is the relational consideration of the first real substance, preserves, at the beginning, the same degree of ontological consistency of it-, we have with such compound the antithetical reference of the second substance, i.e., the first substance. Consequently, the complete division of the continent substance is tripled, with no necessary connection between its respective members. This threefold division of universal, interpreted as a continent substance, can be represented schematically as a complementary to the double division of Figure 2, as follows:

Regarding the analysis of the six types of substance, Arethas draws attention to the discipline that corresponds to each of them as their own material object. As noted above, the *Categories*, a work that represents the dialectic (*διαλεκτική*) only concerns: 1) the compound considered as a logical term susceptible of division and, therefore, as a particular entity capable of being opposite to the universal entity as well as 2) the universal substance containing it. When, instead of taking the first substance as a divisible term, it is considered as reality -as we have already said- the discipline responsible for its study is not dialectic, but physiology "*φυσιολογία*." However, physiology also has by simple substances a material object, even if it also constitutes the proper object of theology (*θεολογίας*).[32]

Figure 2

ἄλλη περιεκτική

τῆς συνθέτου καὶ μερικῆς

ἀπλῆ   σύνθετος (1)

γενικωτάτη   εἰδική

κρείττων   χείρων (2)

τῆς συνθέτου   τῆς συνθέτου

πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν   ἐν τοῖς   ἐπὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς

πολλοῖς

πρώτη οὐσία   δευτέρα οὐσία (3)

32 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 239, 169, 1-23.

2.5. The Concept of Universal as a "Second" Substance

Another typically Aristotelian characteristic is the definition of the universal as a term that is said of a subject, and that is in a subject, without the universal being a subject or substance. This definition of the universal is that which corresponds, on the one hand, to both genre and differences and, on the other hand, to the accidents. For its part, the first substance is in time and in space, but it does not subsist in another substance as, for example, is the difference of whiteness (τὸ λευκόν), which is predicated of it as an accident.

The universal, whether genre or difference, is not as a part of a whole, since it is impossible for it to be outside of that in which it is, i.e., it cannot be given separately.[33] On the other hand, although one of the meanings of "being in something" (τοῦ ἔν τινι) is that which refers to the way in which genre is in the species, Arethas points out that this relation is not the whole of its parts, since in this case the whole is not given in each of the parts as an entire unit, but only as an aggregation of all the parts. What happens in the case of the genus that "is in" the species is that it is entirely (ὁλόκληρον) in each one of the species that it comprises and, therefore, of which it can be preached univocally according to the ontological paradigm, "καὶ ὅλον μὲν ἐν μέρεσιν, γένος δ᾽ ἐν εἴδει, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ὅλον οὐκ ἔστιν ὁλόκληρον εἰ μὴ ἐν πᾶσιν ἢ τοῖς μέρεσιν, τὸ δὲ γένος καὶ ἐνὶ εἴδει δίδωσιν ἑαυτὸ ὅλον· τοῦ γὰρ ὁρισμοῦ τοῦ γένους πάντα τὰ ὑπ᾽ αὐτὸ εἴδη ἐπίσης μετέχει."[34]

This is one of the eleven ways in which the relation "to be in" can legitimately be said (κατὰ φύσιν); this occurs when relations in which, 1) genre is in species and, 2) species is in the genus, considered from a logical and predicative point of view are not, respectively: 1) that which occurs between the whole and the part in the whole, or 2) that is given between the parts and the whole since, in the first case, 1) the genus is whole in each of the species subordinate to it and, in the second case, 2) the parts representing the species are also, in some way, a kind of "whole." We have the same result, as regards this relation, in the case of the species considered physically. Nor, then, can it be said that the species is in matter as a part: neither is the species a part of matter, because it is not material (μὴ τῆς ὕλης μέρος τὸ εἶδος), nor is it a part of the compound formed from the coprinciples of the individual substance, because it is not separable, but exists only in matter (εἰ ἐννπάρχει, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ᾽ ὑπάρχει) shaping the reality of the first substance.[35] This is because the composition from the species and matter that occurs in the individual substance, the first substance, does not mean a whole composed of parts, but the possibility that the species under reality are an upstart entity (ἐπιγιγνόμενοι).[36] In this way, the species is not in matter as a part of the substantial compound nor is it separable from matter. To say otherwise, it would be an excess (πλεονεξίας),

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[33] Ibid., § 227, 151, 10-13.
[34] Ibid., § 227, p. 151, 29-32.
[35] Cfr. item ibid., § 227, 154, 8-10: "πάλιν τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ, μὴ ὂν αὐτῆς μέρος μηδὲ δυνάμενον χωρὶς αὐτῆς εἶναι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ." Similarly, to the incorrectness of representing the pretense of wanting to separate the species of matter, as if it were a part of the compound is given of trying to separate the accidents, but in the subject.
[36] Ibid., § 227, 152, 15-16: "οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ σύνθεσις τῶν μερῶν τὸ ὅλον, ἀλλ᾽ ἡ ποιὰ σύνθεσις μετὰ τοῦ ἐπιγιγνομένου εἴδους."

"τὸ μὴ ὡς μέρος ἐν ὅλῳ, τὸ ἀδύνατον χωρὶς εἶναι τοῦ ἐν ᾧ ἐστι, τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἁπλῶς ἔν τινι, [...] πάλιν τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ, μὴ ὂν αὐτῆς μέρος μηδὲ δυνάμενον χωρὶς αὐτῆς εἶναι, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ."[37]

2.6. The Explicit Reference to Platonic Ideas

The two explicit references to the Ideas that are contained in the commentary of Arethas on the *Categories*, as well as indirectly, the mention of pro universal (*πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν*) are found in scholia taken verbatim from Simplicius.[38] This means that, in the whole commentary, Arethas does not deal directly with the Platonic Ideas as, for the rest, happens with the other subjects treated. However, since the Platonic theory of Ideas can be understood as the first historical formulation of the problem of the nature of the universal, and since both the development of Aristotelian logic and the birth of Aristotle's critique of the Platonic theory of ideas start from that first formulation, we must not lose sight of the fact that, in all his explanation of category, Arethas does not fail to refer implicitly to the Platonic Ideas as a permanent term of opposition. We saw this in his constant reference to the texts of the Alexandrian commentators, which speak of the triple classification of the universal, and in his extracts from Simplicius, where he studies the criterion used by Aristotle to establish the distinction between the "first" and "second" substance. For the most part, the hermeneutic orientation followed by Arethas is demanded by the self-reference in the *Categories* to Platonic philosophy in general and, in particular, to the so-called Platonic theory of Ideas. This is a feature that is present in the whole Aristotelian work but that, in the case of *Categories* - to constitute the Aristotelian categories, in general, the logical reformulation of the Ideas and the five major genres of the Sophists - happens to occupy a main place. The fact that Arethas speaks explicitly, even through the literal quoting of Simplicius, regarding the Platonic Ideas, is but one of the ways in which, in his commentary he alludes to its nature, since they themselves represent not only the term of opposition of the categories, but even its more general hermeneutical horizon.

In addition to taking Simplicius as one of the basic sources -along with Plato himself, and Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Olympiodorus, Elias, and David- for the writing of his commentary, Arethas copies literally ten fragments of Simplicius, which occupy much of the second half of the commentary; this circumstance only happens again with Iamblichus, from whom he also copies a literal passage.[39] Arethas' high opinion of Simplicius can be seen in his use of Simplicius as a main source, and in his copying ten fragments from Simplicius, which reveal that Arethas regarded Simplicius as more precise than any other Aristotelian commentators[40].

The passages that Arethas takes verbatim from Simplicius, in consonance with their decided Neoplatonism, have as objects the criticisms of the incoherencies or theoretical in-

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37 Ibid., § 227, p. 151, 10-12 and ibid., 154, 8-10.

38 Ibid., § 271, 194, 12 and ibid., § 291, 206, 34.

39 The fragments are easily recognizable by their title, which says "Σιμπλικίου" and correspond to the following sections of comment: 240, 248, 256, 258, 271, 289, 290, 291, 297 and 314; the Iamblichus is 308.

40 Ibid., § 245, 270, 23: "Σιμπλίκιος δὲ ἀκριβέστερον τούτοις ἐπιβάλλων οὕτως φησίν·[...]."

consistencies in which Aristotle falls in the *Categories* and with respect to the determination of the universal as the second substance. We must draw attention to the fact that Arethas uses primarily Neoplatonic sources for the exegesis of a work as fundamental as the *Categories*; in principle, nothing would have prevented him from resorting to sources that, traditionally and retrospectively, from the point of view of the external history of philosophy, are usually considered more faithful to Aristotle, as is the case of Alexander of Aphrodisias whom Simplicius himself quotes, but only to refute his theoretical positions.

The first of the fragments of Simplicius constitutes, by itself, a treatise of Neoplatonic reinterpretation of the *Categories*. It shows how the "second" determination of the universal substance is in double contradiction.[41] The Stagirite says, by way of example, that the genre "man" (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) should contain some man (ὁ τὶς ἄνθρωπος), as well as that, in the genre "animal" (τὸ ζῷον), not only does it contain the aforementioned genre of "man," but also, some individual man (ὅ τε ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ τὶς ἄνθρωπος περιέχεται).[42] What happens is that Aristotle does not take into account that once the genus "man" has been abolished, the individual men who are ordained under him, are suppressed. Once the genre "animal" has been suppressed, that of "man," and with it, the individual men, who, under "man," were also deleted under "animal." From this analysis, the priority given to the nature of the species with respect to the individuals contained by them is followed, as well as the priority of the genera in relation to the species and individuals that, due to their greater extent and less intensity that they contain, "ἀλλ᾽ εἰ ἀνθρώπου μὲν ἀναιρεθέντος ἀνήρηνται οἱ ἄτομοι ἄνθρωποι καὶ ζῴου ἀναιρεθέντος ὁ ἄνθρωπος, οὐ μέντοι καὶ ἔμπαλιν, πρῶτα δὲ τῇ φύσει τὰ συναναιροῦντα μὲν μὴ συναναιρούμενα δὲ ἐλέγομεν, πῶς πρῶται μὲν οὐσίαι αἱ ἄτομοι, δεύτεραι δὲ τὰ εἴδη καὶ τρίται τὰ γένη."[43]

This argument of the hypothetical suppression is of the utmost importance, since it establishes, as a presupposition, the priority of the universal about nature. Aristotle does not pose the question precisely (οὐκ ἀκριβῶς ἠρώτηται), for it is not the substance (οὐσία) that is "second," for the substance is not subject to rank but, if something can be said to be "second," it is universal (καθόλου) when it is not conceived as substance, e.g. as an Idea, but as a common term (τὸ κοινόν, τὰ κοινά). And, in fact, in two individuals belonging to the same species, as Socrates and Dion belong to that of "man," there is an indifferent essence (τίς μία ἀδιάφορος οὐσία) that serves as an objective reference for our conceptualization, since it is this who also allows us to extract (ἀποδιαλαμβανόντων ἡμῶν) the common by omission of the multiple properties (ἰδιώμασιν) that, by way of accidents, occur in them.[44] Therefore, Aristotle is wrong to think that once individuals are suppressed, that the eidetic universal and substantial is deleted when, in fact, only the common term that we go back (μεταβαίνομεν)

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41 Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. Kalfleisch (1907), 83, 32 - 85; the passage runs on the difficulties of Aristotle, categories 2a 14- 19. Cfr. Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 240, ed. M. Share (1994), 173, 8 – 175, 4.

42 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 240, 173, 8-175,4.

43 Ibid., § 240, 173, 19-23.

44 Ibid., § 240, 174, 1-3: "ἔνεστι δὲ ὅμως τις μία ἀδιάφορος οὐσία καθ᾽ ἥν τὸ κοινὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς θεωρεῖται, ἥτις περὶ τὰ καθ᾽ ἕκαστα καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ μέρος ἔχει τὸ ἐπινοεῖσθαι."

through abstraction would be deleted: *εἰ δὴ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα ἀναιρεθείη, οὐδ' ἂν τὸ κοινὸν εἴη.*[45]

That is, it is the concept that disappears with the abolishment of individuals, whereas the Idea, given its aseity, would remain in its being even in the case that there were no individuals caused by it. The common thing, besides being a mere concept, is found in individuals as a part that completes the substance of these, once it becomes in them what was previously potential. Also, in this sense, it can be understood that the common disappears - this time, as one of its parts - once the individuals are suppressed. At this point, the ontological posterity of the common is revealed, not already with respect to the Idea, but with respect to the individual, and from two points of view: 1) the common comes before the individual becomes in actuality (*ἐνέργειαν*) only after being in the individual, before which it was only potential - and, it is known, in Aristotle, that the act is prior to the power as to the nature;[46] 2) the common is that before the individual because he is in it as a part, who has the virtuality to complete its being (*ὡς μέρη συμπληροῦσι τὰς ἀτόμους [...] συμπληρωτικὴν γὰρ ἔχει τοῦτο τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀτόμων οὐσιῶν*) - and it is understood that the whole is, of logical necessity, prior to its parts.[47]

From this circumstance is derived a consequence that annuls the Aristotelian thesis that the first substance is the individual: if the common is found in individuals as a term that completes their being or substance, it is seen that such individuals do not enjoy self-subsistence, which should not be termed "substance" and still less "first substance": "*ὅλως δὴ εἰ μὴ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ εἴδη καὶ γένη, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐν τοῖς ἀτόμοις κατὰ τὴν Περιπατητικὴν συνήθειαν παραλαμβάνομεν, πῶς οὐκ ἂν εἴη ταῦτα Δευτέρα ἐν οὐσίαις λόγῳ, μέρη τῶν ἀτόμων ὄντα καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ἔχοντα τὸ εἶναι, ὅτι μέρη οὐσιῶν εἰσιν; ἐπεὶ ὡς μὴ καθ' ἑαυτὰς ὑφεστῶσαι οὐδ' ἂν εἶεν οὐσίαι.*"[48]

Simplicius concedes to Alexander of Aphrodisias (*ἡ κοινὴ οὐσία*) that the common substance can be found in individuals but, unlike him, he maintains that it exists by itself (*καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὖσα*) and that, by this alone, it is capable of perfecting the individual being. At this point of agreement, Simplicius recommends taking a step forward, and saying that, having for iself the universal, the most sovereign of all kinds of substance, it is this itself, by the activity that it is inherent to it, that is transferred to individuals who, in this way, participate in this. Thus, it is without difficulty that the universal is the supreme term as to the reason of nature:

κἂν γὰρ σὺν τοῖς ἀτόμοις ἔχῃ τὸ εἶναι ἡ κοινὴ οὐσία, ἀλλὰ καθ' ἑαυτὴν οὖσα συντελεῖ εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν τῶν ὑποκειμένων. ἄμεινον δὲ λέγειν ὡς τὸ καθόλου καθ' ἑαυτὸ τὴν κυριωτάτην οὐσίαν ἔχον μεταδίδωσι καὶ τοῖς καθ' ἕκαστα ἑαυτὸ καὶ οὕτως κυριώτερόν ἐστι τῶν ἀτόμων κατὰ τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγου.[49]

According to Simplicius, Alexander of Aphrodisias does not think with sanity (*οὐχ ὑγιῶς τοῦτο νομίζων*) when he affirms the ontological priority of the individual over any other type of being. For the priority, which he strives to recognize, is not absolute but is constitutively referred to the moment in which, simultaneously, matter receives the species. In

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45 Ibid., § 240, 174, 6-7.
46 Ibid., § 240, 174, 25-27: "καὶ ὡς κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν τῷ ἀτόμῳ γενόμενακαὶ τοῦτο ὅπερ ἦσαν καθ' ἑαυτὰ δυνάμει, τὸ δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ πρότερον, ὕστερον δὲ τὸ δυνάμει."
47 Ibid., § 240, 174, 25: "τὰ δὲ μέρη τοῦ ὅλου δεύτερα."
48 Ibid., § 240, 174, 12-16.
49 Ibid., § 240, 174, 20-24.

this case, it is not simply that matter receives the species passively, but it is this that is actively given and given to matter, "*πρὸς ὃν ῥητέον ὡς δι' ἄλλην συντυχίαν γέγονεν τοῦτο, τὸ ἅπαξ δέξασθαι τούτων ἑκάστου τὴν ὕλην τὸ εἶδος. ἔστι μέντοι οὕτως παρασκευασμένος ὁ λόγος ὥστε, εἰ καὶ πολλὰ πεφυκότες ἦσαν αὐτὸν δέχεσθαι, δύναται ἑαυτὸν διδόναι εἰς τὸ πλῆθος.*"[50]

With this, we see how significant it was that Arethas copied texts of such a marked Neoplatonic character in the interpretation of *Categories*, the most anti-Platonic work, so that the subordination of the Idea as a second substance is referred to, of which Aristotle wrote. Of the nine remaining fragments of Simplicius that Arethas copies, we shall emphasize those two in which its author refers explicitly to the Platonic Ideas.

The first passage in which he speaks explicitly about the Platonic Ideas (*αἱ δὲ ἰδέαι κατὰ Πλάτωνα*),[51] is intended to refute the Aristotelian definition of substance according to which it is said that it cannot be found in a subject (*εἶναι ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ*).[52] The "not being" implies not being and not being able to be substance; in the best of cases it is a definition dictated in line with our way of knowing (*πρὸς τὸ γνῶναι* [...] *πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι*), not with being of the substance, which is precisely expressed in the being by itself (*καθ' ἑαυτὸ εἶναι*)[53]. One of the arguments that, according to Simplicius, invalidates the Aristotelian thesis that substance cannot be found in the subject is the compatibility between various types of substance, of which the Ideas represent the cusp, "*ἀπορεῖται πάλιν πῶς οὐκ ἔσται οὐσία ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ, ὅταν νοῦς ᾖ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δὲ ἐν σώματι, αἱ δὲ ἰδέαι κατὰ Πλάτωνα ἐν τῷ νῷ.*"[54]

According to the passage from Simplicius quoted by Arethas, substances can settle on one another, not as parts of a whole, but coexist separately (*ἐνυπαρχούσης χωριστῶς*) in imperfect nature and potential reception, making possible the actualization (*ἐντελεχείας*) and present substance (*ἐνέργειαν*)[55]. One of the similes with which, afterwards, Simplicius tries to exemplify the way in which the substances appear, so that it can be said that there is the presence of one in others (*τὴν τῶν οὐσιῶν παρουσίαν ἐν ἑτέραις*), besides that of the helmsman and of the continuous causality, is that of the center and the circles that it potentially contains: it is a case of substance that, unified and culminated in itself, contains the highest point. The image had been used frequently by Plotinus, and was also used by Maximus the Confessor.[56]

The second passage in which he speaks of Ideas is very brief and hardly significant for what it brings to the clarification of its nature. Once is settled the difference between, on the one hand, 1) the genres and the species, which are preached, according to Aristotle, about something determined like this (*τόδε τι, ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι κατηγορεῖται*) and complete

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50 Ibid., § 240, 174, 26-30.

51 Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias commentarium*, ed. Kalfleisch (1907), 96, 20-27; ibid., 95, 10-22.

52 Aristotle, *Categories*, 3a, 7-21.

53 Arethas, *Εἰς τὰς Ἀριστοτέλους Κατηγορίας* § 245, 178, 20-25.

54 Ibid. §271, 194, 11-12.

55 Ibid. §271, 194, 11-17: "*ὡς οὐσία πάρεστιν ἐν ἑτέρᾳ οὐσίᾳ, οὐχ ὡς μέρους τινὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τούτων ἐνόντων, ἀλλ' ὡς τῆς ἐντελεχείας καὶ τῆς κατ' ἐνέργειαν οὐσίας ἐν τῇ κατὰ δύναμιν ὑποδοχῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀτελεῖ φύσει ἐνυπαρχούσης χωριστῶς.*"

56 Ibid., § 271, 194, 20-24: "*ἢ τῆς ἡνομένης οὐσίας περιεχούσης ἐν αὐτῇ τὴν πεπληθυσμένην, ὥσπερ τοῦ κέντρου ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν κύκλον συνειληφότος.*"

(συμπληρωτικά) the first substances and, on the other hand, the differences, which allow a genre to be specified through them (τοιόνδε, ἐν τῷ ποῖόν τι κατηγορεῖται) it is pointed out as a task worthy of study to clarify whether (εἰδοποιεῖν), on the part of those who grant that the genres and species are a sign to which corresponds, semantically, a reality, also in this case it must be said that they are capable of being mentioned about a this. Such was the Stoic conception of the universals, which thus constituted a case of conceptualism or simple nominalism, as appreciated as the intermediate determination of the concept between the real object and the term that means it. Simplicius affirms that both Chrysippus, who responds affirmatively and, in general, the Stoics who are unaware of the fact that not every substance means a certain thing, are wrong in this respect.[57] Arethas copies, without adding any criticism, a text in which Simplicius criticizes (as we saw in Photius) the Aristotelian adjectivization of the οὐσία. On the other hand, as we have just seen, the same text contains a critique of Stoic materialism, which had also served Photius to propose his own solution to the problem of universals.

3. Conclusion

In contrast to Aristotle's commentary on categories, which the Byzantine scholar dedicates to the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, precisely because of the mediation of Aristotle and his Alexandrian sources, he is relatively far removed from the strictly Aristotelian or, rather, the proper approaches to Aristotelian logic. Because of this, the passages in which Arethas faithfully follows Aristotle are less numerous in the commentary to *Isagoge* than in the commentary to the *Categories*. Both comments depend to the same degree on Alexandria's Neoplatonic commentators who, as we have indicated, are the principal and almost exclusive sources of those from whom Arethas extracts his information.

However, the abundance of Platonic and Neoplatonic elements that we have highlighted does not imply the cancellation of Aristotelian philosophy. Rather, several clearly Aristotelian points remain in force, as is the case of the repeated denial that being constitutes a genus, which reveals, both in Porphyrius and in the Alexandrians, as well as in Arethas himself, the ontological paradigm of the *Categories*.[58] A second argument against Neoplatonism is the careful criticism of the dogmatism implicit in the Platonic custom of proceeding in logical division in a disjunctive way[59] since, in this way, not all beings are contained: it is what, e.g., happens in the classes of the "animate" and "inanimate," since, in addition to those are given the "incorporeal" and the same "substance"; or in that of the "rational" and "irrational," since there are also the "mortal" and "immortal." In both cases, it can be said: "ἐπειδή εἰσιν ἄλλα τινὰ ὄντα παρὰ ταῦτα."[60]

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[57] Ibid., § 291, 206, 32-37; particularly, cfr. Ibid., 33-34: "Χρύσιππος ἀπορεῖ περὶ τῆς ἰδέας εἰ τόδε τι ῥηθήσεται."

[58] Arethas affirms the ontological paradigm by denying that being is a genre, ibid., § 80, 49, 14 - 50, 19; ibid., § 82, 52, 20 – 53, 3; ibid., § 108, 65, 15-20.

[59] Plotin VI 1,2,8.

[60] Arethas, *Εἰς τὴν Πορφυρίου Εἰσαγωγήν* § 68, ed. M. Share (1994), 40, 18-19.

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The logical inconsistency in making sense
of an ineffable God of Islam

Abstract: With the advent of classical logic we are continuing to observe an adherence to the laws of logic. Moreover, the system of classical logic exhibits a prominent role within analytic philosophy. Given that the laws of logic have persistently endured in actively defining classical logic and its preceding system of logic, it begs the question as to whether it actually proves to be consistent with Islam. To consider this inquiry in a broader manner; it would be an investigation into the consistency between Islam and the logic which has been the predominant driving force of analytic philosophy. Despite the well documented engagement and novel contributions made in the field of logic by Arab and Islamic theologians/logicians, I think this question deserves examination not just in terms of classical logic but also from perspectives which go beyond classical logic, namely, non-classical logic. Doing so, would I believe, retain this inquiry within the purview of analytic philosophy despite the reference to non-classical logic. To be more specific, this question would be directed toward the Islamic theologian who espouses the system of classical logic in attempting to make sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. The inquiry would seek to determine if classical logic is consistent (amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. This would principally involve an analysis which determines whether the metaphysical assumptions of the laws of logic (more specifically the law of non-contradiction) are consistent in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. I shall argue that it is inconsistent. I shall establish my position on this matter by demonstrating why classical logic is inconsistent (not amenable) with an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Although, I am principally concerned with classical logic, my argument is as applicable to all *earlier* systems of logic as much as it is to classical logic. This is on the basis that both systems of logic, namely, all preceding systems and classical logic, consider the laws of logic as defining features.

Key words: al-Ghazālī; classical logic; analytic philosophy; non-classical logic; Islam; God; ineffable; foundationalism; logical realism

Introduction

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) was an erudite and illustrious 12ᵗʰ century Islamic theologian who had postulated an interesting notion of God. Al-Ghazālī posited that God is unrelatably unique and unknowable[1]. This involved thinking of God in a manner that is essentially incomparable to any human categories[2]. I refer to this particular notion of God as an

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[1] See Fadlou Shehadi, *Ghazal's Unique Unknowable God* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

[2] God is not a body shaped nor a substance delimited and determinate. He does not resemble bodies either

absolute ineffable God. I shall go on to demonstrate that this absolute ineffable notion of God is a contradictory notion. Nonetheless, contrary to what it seems, al-Ghazālī does not anticipate severing the relationship between man and his creator in having postulated this particular notion of God. As a matter of fact "Al-Ghazālī was convinced that God can be conceived and perceived by humans, albeit only after overcoming much difficulty by education or preparation such as "polishing of the heart"" (Griffel, 2009, p. 263). Being able to acquire an appreciation of God (in the purest sense) thus had to be, for al-Ghazālī, a profoundly mystical endeavour. This meant that God could not, in His truest sense, be apprehended by espousing *intelligible* mediums, which were in the very slightest, indicative of anthropomorphism. Accordingly, God's absolute transcendence had to be established by redeeming it from the near-enough ineluctable tainting of an underlying philosophy – a metaphysics and logic as I shall go on to demonstrate. These are the kinds of metaphysics and logic that are conventionally espoused in shaping our conceptions in order for us to adjudicate between believable and unbelievable matters.

Yet, pre and post al-Ghazālī – not to mention during his own epoch, there has always been an overwhelmingly strong sense of compulsion in intensively engaging with philosophical theology, philosophy of religion, and more recently, analytic theology. Perhaps it has been a sort of *intellectual* coercion in some respects that has driven many philosophers and theologians alike to make sense of doctrinal matters in a logical and meaningful way. Such pressures may have equally motivated a thorough engagement in philosophical and theological matters only to advance an apophatic understanding of God. Striving to achieve such logical consistency, sense and meaning – regardless of adopting a cataphatic or apophatic approach – has predominantly involved engaging in a philosophical inquisition. The kind, which loosely put, philosophises (in virtue of various methods) about doctrinal matters with the overarching aim to substantiate them in a logically consistent and meaningful way. Ironically however, philosophising about an absolute transcendent God in this sense would be at the cost of subjugating Him to the very categories in virtue of which we seek to substantiate and obtain meaning from. This would, in the post-modern context at least, be committing the sin of onto-theology[3]. An effective way to appreciate this is to consider a conceptual device, which, particularly for most theologians throughout history, has proved to be an indispensable tool in philosophising about matters of the divine. By which I mean, logic.

in being determinate or in being susceptible of division. He is not a substance, and substances do not inhere in Him; and He is not an accident, and accidents do not inhere in Him. He does not resemble any existing thing, and no existing thing resembles Him. Nothing is like Him, and He is not like anything. Measure does not limit Him, and boundaries do not contain Him. (al-Ghazālī translated by Watt in Renard, 2014, p. 109-110)

3 Merold Westphal notes that, '[i]n postmodern contexts, onto-theology is one of the seven deadly sins' ('Overcoming Onto-Theology' (1999), 13). As I understand it, onto-theology involves primarily two tendencies. First, it treats God primarily as an explanatory posit, so that (as Westphal puts it), 'God's *raison d'être* has become to make it possible for human reason to give ultimate explanations'. Second, it involves theorizing about God in a way that presupposes that reason is a reliable tool for arriving at *clear* knowledge of God, so that reasoning about God can ultimately remove divine mystery. To put it in other terms, the view of the onto-theologian is that we can (and sometimes do) believe *exactly the truths about God*, undistorted by our own human circumstances, that God himself believes. (Rea, 2009, p. 9)

Logic's assimilation within Islamic theology in particular has developed[4] to occupy an integral role ever since its initial introduction by al-Ghazālī himself[5]. However, the espousal of Greek logic (by which I mean Aristotelian logic) and its integration with Islamic theology cannot seemingly go without accepting its metaphysical assumptions. These metaphysical assumptions are foundational to a defining feature of Aristotelian logic, namely the laws of logic. This means that while Aristotelian logic has been employed for theological ends within the Islamic tradition, the defining features of this very logic – the laws of logic – presupposes a metaphysics. This has at least two broad consequences. The first is that the Aristotelian logic embraced by Islamic theologians would hardly prove to be metaphysically neutral. Aristotelian logic in this case would not be in a position to offer conclusions that are free from ontological presuppositions since it would advocate a substantive position on how the world is/ought to be. The second is that these metaphysical assumptions which are embedded in Aristotelian logic will naturally (and perhaps implicitly) be incorporated into the explication of certain theological matters. This means to say that the espousal of Aristotelian logic by Islamic theologians has brought with it implicit metaphysical imports which have inevitably infiltrated Islamic theology. As to whether these metaphysical assumptions are in conformity with the Islamic tradition is something I hope to argue against in the course of this paper.

Nevertheless, it is evident that espousing Aristotelian logic so that certain theological matters are able to enjoy an explication that demonstrates logical consistency means conforming to the laws of logic – more specifically the law of non-contradiction. Among the Islamic theologians, Al-Ghazālī's adherence to the law of non-contradiction, for instance, is rather explicit in his *the incoherence of the philosophers*. The theological implications of al-Ghazālī's adherence to the law of non-contradiction are probably more apparent in matters of divine omnipotence[6]. In the specific case of al-Ghazālī at least, this means

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[4] The process of adopting Greek logic continued apace after Ghazālī. The list of prominent Ashʿarī and Māturīdī theologians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who also wrote works on logic is remarkable: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), Sayf al-Dīn alĀmidī (d. 631/1233), Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (*fl.* 674/1275), Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 702/1303), Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Maḥbūbī (d. 747/1346), Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣ fahānī (d. 749/1348), ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355), Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 791/1390), and al- Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413). Amongst the Shīʿīs, Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 655/1258), Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), and Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) wrote works on both theology and logic. (El-Rouayheb, 2016, p. 414)

[5] The first major theologian (*mutakallim*) to call for the adoption of Greek logic in theology was al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), but his advocacy was clearly part of a larger current of cross-fertilization between *kalām* and Avicennan philosophy that was occurring in his time. Ghazālī wrote a number of expositions of logic: *al-Qisṭās al-mustaqīm, Miḥakk al-naẓar, Miʿyār al-ʿilm*, and the introductory paper of his summa of jurisprudence *al-Mustaṣfā*. (El-Rouayheb, 2016, p. 411-412)

[6] It has also been suggested that the acceptance of the Aristotelian scheme of genera led Ghazālī to modify earlier Ashʿarī beliefs about divine omnipotence, for such a scheme implies that there is an objective 'ontological structure' that limits God's Power (Rudolph 2005: 97). Again, the issue bears closer examination. The passage that has been adduced in support of the suggestion is from Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. Ghazālī was there addressing the objection that the Ashʿarī denial of natural causation leads to absurdities. In response, he explained that occasionalism and divine omnipotence should not be taken to mean that God may flout the law of non-con-

that on the one hand he flouts the law of non-contradiction with respect to upholding an absolute ineffable God while on the other hand he espouses the law of non-contradictions in matters such as those discussed in his *the incoherence of the philosophers*.

However, it may be contested that Aristotelian logic was not adopted wholesale by Islamic theologians. The later significant developments in Arabic logic do not merely demonstrate novel contributions in logic but an apparent departure from Aristotle's *Organon*. Later developments in Arabic logic included important transformations which shifted the focus from the constituting parts of the *Oragnon* to matters that were exclusively related to definitions and formal syllogisms. Thus, to imply that the metaphysical baggage in having adopted Aristotelian logic had entirely permeated theological matters would be inaccurate. In response to this, one thing appears to be evident. That is, the engagement with logic in the Arab world was essentially motivated by the process of translating and commenting on the works of Aristotle. It was in the course of this period (late ninth and early tenth century) where Abbasid scholars who were situated in Baghdad had committed themselves to the continuation of the Greek tradition of Aristotelian studies[7]. Early scholars such as al-Fārābī's (d. 339/950) strived in remaining as true as possible to the teachings of Aristotle. Despite these efforts there were departures beginning with Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) who introduced his own innovations into the syllogistic system[8]. Although

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tradition, or create one person in two different places simultaneously, or create will without knowledge, or 'change genera' (*qalb al-ajnās*) such as change blackness into power or change a substance into an attribute. By 'genera' in this context Ghazālī seems to have meant the highest genera, i.e. the categories, for he countenanced change within a single category. For example, a stick might be changed into a snake, for we can conceive of an underlying matter (*mādda*) that first assumes one form (*ṣūra*) and then assumes another (Marmura 1997: 175–6). It is instructive to compare Ghazālī's discussion with a passage from *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Ashʿarī* by Ibn Fūrak (d. 406/1015) in which Ashʿarī is quoted as responding to a similar worry about occasionalism and the denial of natural causation (Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 132–3). Ashʿarī too explained that this theological position does not imply that God may flout the law of non-contradiction. Nor does it imply that God may, for example, create an accident without a non-accident that possesses it. It is also difficult to see, given Ashʿarī's definitions of the three basic categories of created being—accident, atom, and body—how he could have countenanced that for example an accident may change into an atom or body, or vice versa (see *jism, jawhar*, and *ʿaraḍ* in the index to Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 364, 365, 371). Though Ashʿarī stated that God could create cold and wet in fire, he immediately added that in such a case we would cease to call it 'fire' if language users had determined that the word 'fire' only be used of what is hot and bright. Ashʿarī also believed that for example knowledge (*ʿilm*) presupposes life (*ḥayāt*) and that it would be impossible to have the former without the latter (Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 205). The upshot is that both Ashʿarī and Ghazālī recognized an objective 'ontological structure' inthe world. Ghazālī's use of the Aristotelian language of genera and hylomorphism is certainly novel, but it is less clear that this amounted to a significantly different view of divine omnipotence. (El-Rouayheb, 2016, p. 415)

7   In its earliest period, writing on logic in Arabic was closely linked to the process of translating and commenting upon the works of Aristotle. The first important center for this activity was the ʿAbbasid capital Baghdad. There, in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, a circle of scholars emerged who saw themselves as a continuation of the Greek tradition of Aristotelian studies in late antiquity. The most important figure of this circle was undoubtedly Fārābī (d. 950), who wrote esteemed commentaries on the works of the *Organon* following the tradition of the Greek commentators. (El-Rouayheb, 2010, p. 14)

8   Within fifty years of Alfarabi's death, another logical tradition had crystallized, finding its most influential statement in the writings of Avicenna (d. 1037). Although Avicenna revered Alfarabi as a philosophical prede-

these departures may well be considered as the causes of what later instigated develop-ments and novel contributions in Arabic logic, one thing remains undisputable. That is, at no time during these departures, developments and novel contributions in Arabic logic was there a period where the fundamental laws of logic, upon which Aristotelian logic is founded, were disregarded. Thus, for argument sake, even if Aristotelian logic was not ad-opted wholesale and there were departures which gave rise to noteworthy developments in Arabic logic, it is evident that the laws of logic were unequivocally adhered to throughout. In fact, there is hardly an instance of Arab logicians having engaged in a (formal) system of logic while unequivocally having defined the laws of logic. Moreover, when we consid-er the fundamental metaphysical assumptions that are derivatives of Aristotelian logic we cannot help but think of the laws of logic. The laws of logic are very much metaphysical in this sense because they impose constraints with respect to how we conceive/ought to con-ceive and express our conceptions of reality.

More recently with the advent of classical logic we are continuing to observe an ad-herence to the laws of logic. Moreover, the system of classical logic exhibits a prominent role within analytic philosophy. Given that the laws of logic have persistently endured in actively defining classical logic and its preceding system of logic, it begs the question as to whether it actually proves to be consistent with Islam. To consider this inquiry in a broad-er manner; it would be an investigation into the consistency between Islam and the log-ic which has been the predominant driving force of analytic philosophy. Despite the well documented engagement and novel contributions made in the field of logic by Arab and Islamic theologians/logicians, I think this question deserves examination not just in terms of classical logic but also perspectives which go beyond classical logic, namely, non-clas-sical logic. Doing so, would I believe, retain this inquiry within the purview of analytic philosophy despite the reference to non-classical logic. To be more specific, this question would be directed toward the Islamic theologian who espouses the system of classical logic in attempting to make sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. The inquiry would seek to determine if classical logic is consistent (amenable) in making sense of an absolute inef-fable God of Islam. This would principally involve an analysis which determines whether the metaphysical assumptions of the laws of logic (more specifically the law of non-contra-diction) are consistent in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. I shall argue that it is inconsistent. I shall establish my position on this matter by demonstrating why classical logic is inconsistent (not amenable) with an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Al-though, I am principally concerned with classical logic, my argument is as applicable to all

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cessor second only to Aristotle, his syllogistic system differed from Alfarabi's on two major structural points. It is in consequence relatively straightforward to assign subsequent logicians to one or other tradition. Avicenna differed from Alfarabi in his approach to the Aristotelian text, and assumed even less than Alfarabi had that it contained a straightforward exposition of a coherent system merely awaiting sympathetic interpretation to become clear. Due perhaps to the flexibility of the larger philosophical framework with which it was associated, a framework which proved adaptable to the needs of Islamic philosophical theology, Avicenna's logic came in time to be the dominant system against which later logicians set forward their own systems as alternatives or modifications. (Street, 2004, p. 523)

earlier systems of logic as much as it is to classical logic. This is on the basis that both systems of logic, namely, all preceding systems and classical logic, consider the laws of logic as defining features.

Here is my argument:

Classical logic is established upon certain assumptions, namely the laws of logic. These laws allow classical logic to make sense of things.

These assumptions, i.e. the laws of logic (most notably the law of non-contradiction), constrain our metaphysics. That is to say that the laws of logic are not metaphysically neutral.

This metaphysical constraint blocks one from accepting an absolute ineffable God of Islam as being logically consistent. This is because according to classical logic all contradictions are false and an absolute ineffable God is a contradictory notion.

Therefore, classical logic is inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam.

The manner in which I shall present my case during the course of this paper will be a reflection of my argument as constructed above. That is, I shall sequentially state each of the premises mentioned above which should also be considered as the main headings of this paper. Each of these headings will then be divided into subsections in order to delineate between sub-divisional themes which constitute each of the main sections. I shall initiate with premise 1 by providing an insight into how we might think about classical logic. This will include three subsections. Subsection 1.1 will provide two demarcating features between Aristotelian logic and classical logic. This will have two primary objectives. The first will be to obtain a nuanced idea between the distinguishing and common features of Aristotelian and classical logic respectively. While the second would be to set the scene in order to elaborate upon the defining feature of classical logic, namely the laws of logic. I shall move on to elaborate on the laws of logic in subsection 1.2 since it will serve to an essential feature of this paper. Subsequently, in subsection 1.3 I will touch on reasons why the laws of logic, and more specifically the law of non-contradiction, bears an intuitive appeal in virtue of making sense of things.

Moving on to premise 2 I shall focus on how the laws of logic contribute in constraining our metaphysics. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that this implies that the laws of logic are not metaphysically neutral. This will include seven subsections. I shall initiate by postulating a core question, namely, 'would my attempt in making sense of things by way of adhering to the laws of logic encroach upon my metaphysical understanding or belief about any given matter?' I shall begin by addressing this question in the first subsection, 2.1. I will evaluate the cost at which classical logic makes sense of things in virtue of the law of non-contradiction. This will include an assessment of the metaphysical cost of adopting the law of non-contradiction as a method to ascertain inferential/sequential (logical) order that is indicative of validity – the kind with which we make sense of things. Naturally, this will lead on to exploring the ontological status of contradictions which I shall argue in

favour of in subsection 2.2. In subsection 2.3 I will draw on why our conceptions of reality conform to the law of non-contradiction. In subsection 2.4 I will make reference to metaphysical instances of contradictory accounts. In subsection 2.5 I shall introduce dialetheism and its two types, while in subsection 2.6 I will demonstrate how both types of dialetheism infer an underlying association with metaphysical realism. In the final subsection 2.7 I will resort back to the metaphysical neutrality of logic and argue against the neutrality of classical logic.

In premise 3 I shall demonstrate how the metaphysical constraint blocks one from accepting an absolute ineffable God of Islam as being logically consistent. All of the philosophical themes in the preceding sections that I will have drawn upon are hoped to contribute in substantiating premise 3. This will include four subsections. In subsection 3.1 I will provide an overview of the particular notion of an Islamic God that I wish to work with, namely an absolute ineffable God. In subsection 3.2 I shall evaluate this notion of God first in virtue of metaphysical logical realism. In subsection 3.3 I will evaluate this notion of God in virtue of metaphysical foundationalism. It should be noted that both metaphysical logical realism and metaphysical foundationalism act as the metaphysical underpinnings for classical logic. Moreover, much of what has been covered with regards to classical logic in the subsections of premises 1 and 2 loosely reflects features of metaphysical logical realism and metaphysical foundationalism. Thus the introduction of these ideas and evaluating them in virtue of an absolute ineffable God is hardly foreign to my goal – in fact they are very pertinent. Finally, I hope to conclude this paper with premise 4; having established my claim that classical logic is inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam.

1. Classical logic is established upon certain assumptions, namely the laws of logic.
These laws allow classical logic to make sense of things.

In the opening premise of this paper I shall draw on specific features of Aristotelian and classical logic that are distinct *and* common with respect to both of these logical systems. Prior to initiating this task, it would be worthwhile explicating how drawing a distinction between the specific features that are distinct and common with respect to Aristotelian and classical logic proves relevant to my argument. In order to appreciate the relevance, consider the following. As I touched on earlier, Aristotelian logic had been integrated in Islamic theology. The impetus which drove this integration was grounded in the assumption that logic has the potential to assist Islamic scholars in explicating matters by way of demonstrating logical consistency when it came to theology (and jurisprudence)[9]. This

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9 The success and rapid spread of Avicenna's philosophy and logic elicited a strong reaction from establishment theology, whose very intellectual vitality was perceived to be threatened. The clearest and most influential response to Avicenna was given about half a century after his death by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī (d. 1111). A case had been made at least as early as Alfarabi that logic could help Muslim scholars in juristic and theological reasoning. Ġazālī accepted these arguments and went so far as to preface his juridical summa, *The distillation*

meant that Aristotelian logic, despite the novel developments introduced by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) after having departed from al-Fārābī's (d. 339/950) syllogistic system, had provided the foundation in allowing for matters of theology and jurisprudence to enjoy logical demonstration. One of the notable and underlying features of Aristotelian logic that has persistently been upheld by nearly all Islamic theologians throughout the millennia (although this is certainly not exclusive to Islamic theologians in anyway) are the laws of logic. Even with the advent of classical logic, Islamic theologians have seemingly found it *almost* impossible to engage with a formal system of logic while abandoning the laws of logic. Moreover, classical logic, despite its stringent adherence to the laws of logic, has proposed a radically different ontology. The difference in ontology is so significant that it has motivated an incompatibility between the two systems of logic.

I believe both of these matters are problematic in virtue of making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Although I have already written on the issue concerning ontology[10], I shall introduce *how* the recent methods of ontology have created a discord between Aristotelian and classical logic. This would prove beneficial on at least two accounts. Firstly, it would provide an understanding as to how a discord motivated by a naturalistic ontology leads to an incompatibility between the two systems of logic in question. Secondly and quite naturally, it would help appreciate the required shift from Aristotelian to classical logic. Once both, the ontology which divides the two systems of logic, and the need to embrace the more powerful and expressive logic of the two logics (classical logic) has been acknowledged, I shall focus on a specific feature that is common in both systems of logic. By this I mean the laws of logic. The laws of logic have persisted from Aristotelian to classical logic and are thus common to both of these logical systems. My primary focus in this regard will be to demonstrate that this feature, namely the laws of logic is inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Thus, regardless which one of the two logical systems is espoused with the aim of making sense of an absolute ineffable God, it would, ironically, fail in doing so. Although I shall principally focus on classical logic, I hope the need for my exposition on Aristotelian logic has become apparent.

The consequence which would give rise in this respect would materialise irrespective of the theologians/philosophers who employ it – Islamic or non-Islamic. This is because whichever one of the two logical systems is espoused by any scholar, it would inexorably adhere to the laws of logic. If this claim is true, then the prime reason for the Islamic theologian in espousing logic (both logical systems can be considered here) would become redundant. Such systems of logic would hardly prove to explicate matters pertaining to theology and jurispru-

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of the principles of jurisprudence, with a short treatise on logic. Logic continued to face pious opposition after Ġazālī, but even scholars who were opposed to Greek philosophy in its various manifestations were agreed that, taken as a formal system, logic was unobjectionable.

Logic after Ġazālī was regularly studied by Muslim scholars for use in theology and jurisprudence. It also continued to be studied by Muslim scholars who were interested in the deeper formal and philosophical questions Avicenna had raised. (Street, 2004, p. 523-524)

10 Ahsan, A. (2019) Quine's Ontology and the Islamic Tradition. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 36(2), pp.20-63.

dence as it was initially considered. In fact, any of the two systems of logic adopted by the Islamic theologian would, ironically, defy the very God, and thus the religion, whose theological tenets and jurisprudence they are attempting to demonstrate with the aid of this very logic.

1.1 The incompatibility between Aristotelian logic and classical logic

To begin with, the term 'classical' in the phrase 'classical logic' is somewhat misleading. It seemingly offers an extended connection to the kind of logic developed and practiced in antiquity. It ostensibly gives the impression that it has neatly emanated from Aristotle's *Organon* or that it offers remnants that have persisted from the medieval times. At the very least, and perhaps more decisively, it appears to suggest that it is grounded in certain fundamental principles that have originated from the Greeks. Now although this particular perspective may offer a superficial understanding of the 'classical' aspect in the phrase 'classical logic', it requires to be nuanced. This is primarily to demarcate between those aspects of Aristotelian logic which bear and, those which fail to bear, any continuity with classical logic. It is something that is often taken for granted by philosophers when it comes to bridging between Aristotelian logic and classical logic.

There are at least two subtle distinctions to be made in this regard. The first of these distinctions concerns an incompatibility between Aristotelian logic and classical logic. The second of these distinctions draws on certain fundamental principles that have persisted from Aristotelian logic and have been unequivocally adopted by classical logic. Let us take each of these in turn. The former of these distinctions aims to demonstrate that classical logic is not a direct extension of Aristotelian logic since the two are incompatible. To think of classical logic as a replacement of Aristotelian logic would imply the inaptness of the latter and a requirement of the former. Although there is little doubt that this was the case, it is not a radical replacement as such. The birth of classical logic does not necessarily imply the death of Aristotelian logic which persisted with little change from antiquity throughout the medieval period and up until the nineteenth century. Of course, the scope which spans from Aristotle's logic found in the *Organon* right up to the dawn of classical logic with Frege and Russell is undeniably diverse. However, the development of such diversity does not manifest a radical transformation in any interesting sense. At most we might imply that classical logic is an extension of the theory of syllogism. This extension, very crudely put, enhanced the theory of syllogism with a greater expressive power that it lacked. In doing so, classical logic did not eradicate Aristotelian logic only to start afresh. Instead, it constructed a more sophisticated system upon an existing one.

However, this understanding is somewhat inaccurate. Aristotelian logic is actually incompatible with classical logic. This incompatibility negates a succession and continuity that might be assumed between the two logics. Priest (2006) draws a simile between the incompatibility of these two logics' and Euclidean geometries in the following manner, "Aristotelian logic is incompatible with classical logic in just the same way that non-Euclidean geometries are incompatible with Euclidean geometry" (Priest, 2006, p.166). This incompatibility involves many of the immediate inferences (developed by Aristotelian logicians into an elaborate system in what is called the traditional square of opposition) having

become obsolete in virtue of existential import. Contemporary logicians have abandoned most of the immediate inferences featured in the traditional square of opposition with the exception of contradictories and obversions.

In order to appreciate how most of the features of the traditional square of opposition have become obsolete, it would require understanding the metaontological framework upon which classical logic operates. Quine's (naturalist) metaontological view is considered the standard framework in this regard. It is used to characterize our ontological commitments in terms of values of bound variables. That is to say, adopting the Quinean metaontological framework would consequently mean it is the acting criterion and methodology by which we assert the existence of objects. Superimposing this methodology upon atomic sentences is what allows them to obtain a semantic value which in the case of classical logic is restricted to either true or false. That is if in a given sentence the subject term denotes a predicate term of a named object which happens to be true, then that sentence is (at least) true. If, on the other hand, the subject term in a given sentence denotes a predicate term of a named object which happens to be false, then that sentence is (at least) false. Thus the sematic value of sentences of this kind depends on whether the denotations of the predicate terms obtain in reality or not. If the predicate term can be picked out as obtaining in virtue of the Quinean metaontological framework then it is considered true. This is because the predicate term has existential import which ontologically commits one to (accepting) the existence of the particular named object mentioned in the given sentence. If the predicate term cannot be picked out as obtaining in virtue of the Quinean metaontological framework then it is considered false. This is because the predicate term has no existential import which prohibits one from ontologically committing to the existence of the particular named object mentioned in the given sentence. Based on this understanding it appears that particular propositions that are commonly represented by I-propositions and O-propositions have existential import while universal propositions that are commonly represented by A-propositions and E- propositions do not.

Let us unpack this further by translating the syllogistic forms that are featured in the traditional square of opposition into classical logic, namely, first-order predicate logic. This will demonstrate how consistently each of the immediate inferences that constitute the square of opposition would correspond with classical logic. Priest (2006) has illustrated this in the following table:

AaB	All As are Bs	$\forall x(Ax \supset Bx)$
AeB	No As are Bs	$\neg \exists x(Ax \wedge Bx)$
AiB	Some As are Bs	$\exists x(Ax \wedge Bx)$
AoB	Some As are not Bs	$\exists x(Ax \wedge \neg Bx)$

It's rather evident that the A-propositions and E- propositions fail to have any existential import in first-order predicate logic. The A-proposition is translated in first-order predicate logic with a universal quantifier, namely '$\forall$'. This does not imply the existence of As

in the sense that there are *A*s and that all *A*s are *B*s. Instead it is disallowing the existence of any *A*s which are not *B*s. This would imply that it is possible that there are no *A*s; yet if there does exist any *A*s then they are *B*s. The E-proposition infers something similar. It has been translated with the negation of an existential quantifier, namely, '¬∃'. In this instance, no *A*s are *B*s implies that no *A*s exist which are *B*s. It asserts the negation of the existence of an *A* which is a *B*.

Existential import, therefore, has some serious implications on the traditional square of opposition. As a result of these implications it would leave the traditional square of opposition redundant. For instance, translating in first-order predicate logic would make possible for contrary propositions such as A-propositions and E-propositions to be true together. All *A*s are *B*s in A-propositions implies that it is not possible to have an *A* that is not *B*. No *A*s are *B*s in E-propositions implies that it is not possible to have an *A* that is *B*. Given that both of these propositions fail to have any existential import it would imply that there are no *A*s. If there are no *A*s then there is no *A* that is not *B and* there is no *A* that is *B*. Both of these propositions would hold at one time. Subsequently, propositions which are subcontraries such as I-propositions and O-propositions would both be false when there are no *A*s. Both of these propositions would no longer be subcontraries.

Moreover, the subalternation relation also breaks down. Since A-propositions and E-propositions no longer have any existential import, nothing can be derived from them. This means that propositions that rely on them to be true such as I-propositions and O-propositions can no longer offer the truth-values they intend. Lastly, propositions of contraposition and conversion are also impacted by existential import. A-propositions, namely, all *A*s are *B*s would not imply its contraposition, namely, some *B*s are *A*s. This is because universal propositions fail to assert the existence of *A*s due to which there will not be some *B*s which are *A*s. The same would apply for E-propositions, namely, no *A*s are *B*s would not imply its contraposition, namely, some not-*B*s are not-*A*s. Of course the conversion of O-propositions is invalid and likewise so is the contraposition of I-propositions. This leaves us behind with contradictories and obversions.

As a result of this, the traditional square of opposition no longer seems to represent logical relationships that hold between its constituting propositions. The cause of this, as it has been demonstrated, is rooted in existential import. This means to say that a particular method of engaging in metaphysics and, more precisely, the way we determine our ontological commitments have been prioritized in establishing the existence of things in the world. This newer method of engaging in metaphysics and determining our ontological commitments is elaborately expressed by classical logic. In particular, this is expressed with the use of quantifiers and bound variables. Quantifiers act as linguistic devises which are used to specify the quantity of things of a certain type that satisfy some property. The variables stand in for an object of the domain of quantification, to which various properties could then be predicated. It is the value of the bound variable that captures the existential import of the object in question.

It is with the aid of such devises that classical logic functions. It is this functionality that proves to be incompatible with Aristotelian logic when translating the syllogistic forms

that are featured in the traditional square of opposition into classical logic, namely, first-order predicate logic. The translation is at least one of the ways by which this particular incompatibility between Aristotelian logic and classical logic is manifested. Moreover, this incompatibility between the two logics would leave no room to assume that classical logic is an extension of the Aristotelian logic. As for those who insist in using the term 'extension', it is not the kind that has allowed for the succession of classical logic to have neatly emanated from Aristotelian logic without the need for serious revision. Thus, to be a little more meticulous in this matter, it would be better suited to say that classical logic is a replacement[11] (or even an improvement[12]) of Aristotelian logic rather than its extension. This replacement would be inclusive of abandoning the traditional square of opposition as well as all those developments that have succeeded in granting classical logic a greater expressive power[13].

1.2 Fundamental axioms that have persisted from Aristotelian logic to classical logic

The latter of these distinctions aims to demonstrate that there are certain fundamental principles that have persisted from Aristotelian logic and have been unequivocally adopted by classical logic[14]. These principles or, axioms rather, are the laws of logic. The laws of logic are commonly identified as:

1. The law of identity: $\alpha \equiv \alpha$

2. The law of non-contradiction: $\neg \, (\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha)$

3. The law of excluded middle: $\alpha \vee \neg\alpha$

Although the law of identity is specifically attributed to Leibniz[15], the law of non-contra-

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11 As stated by Beaney (2015): At the foundation of Frege's creation of quantificational logic in his *Begriffsschrift* of 1879 was his use of function–argument analysis, which replaced the subject–predicate analysis of traditional logic. Beaney, 2015, p.18)

12 This logic, now usually called classical logic (how inappropriate this name is should now be evident), was so great an improvement on traditional logic that it soon became entrenched. (Priest, 2004, p. 25)

13 This new system of logic, namely predicate calculus, involves devising (existential and universal) quantifier notations and integrating the propositional calculus. It proves to be more sophisticated and allows quantifying over more complex statements. It operates by way of "function-argument analysis" as Beaney (2012) puts it. This can be distinguished from the traditional subject-predicate analysis.

14 More generally, from traditional Aristotelian logic through modern quantification theory all the way to free logic, the following two principles are assumed in the background (for any predicate 'P'):

(9) Everything is either P or not P.

(10) Nothing is both P and not P.

(Varzi, 2014, p. 57)

15 Feldman (1970) has explored whether the law of identity was actually formulated by Leibniz. He concludes that Leibniz did not present any version of it; however, there is one reason for why it is associated with him. Feldman goes on to articulate this reason. What is more pertinent in this case however is what he states in the opening of his essay. This reads as follows:

A certain fundamental view about identity is associated with Leibniz. Many contemporary philosophers call the principle which expresses this view "Leibniz' Law." Some even go further and speak of "Leibniz-identity" or "identity in Leibniz' sense." One particularly explicit statement of the more moderate point can be found in Tarski's Introduction to Logic: "Among the logical laws concerning the concept of identity the most

diction and excluded middle has been expressed by Aristotle in his Metaphysics[16]. These laws are considered to be logical truths. This means that they are statements that are taken to be true in virtue of their logical form. Take for example the law of non-contradiction, formally expressed as $\neg\,(\alpha \land \neg\alpha)$. It states that it cannot be the case that both α and not α. Regardless of the actual truth value of the variable α, the formula on whole would always be true, simply because a statement and its negation cannot both be true at any one time. The truth of this matter is one which holds no matter what the actual facts of the world may be. This kind of truth is commonly known as a tautology. A contradiction on the other hand, which would be the result of defying the law of non-contradiction, would always be false no matter what the actual facts of the world may be.

These laws did not happen to persist throughout history without being contested simply because they are attributed to Aristotle. In fact much of Aristotle's views have encountered various degrees of criticism ever since they were expressed. However, the laws of logic have incontrovertibly been upheld as high orthodoxy throughout Western[17] intellectual history in particular. The same goes for the most part of Islamic[18] intellectual history – with a few notable exceptions of course[19]. Even today this attitude actively contributes to-

fundamental is the following: x = y if, and only if, x has every property which y has, and y has every property which x has. This law was first stated by LEIBNIZ (although in somewhat different terms) and hence may be called LEIBNIZ' LAW." Tarski did not provide a reference to the place where, according to him, Leibniz stated that law. In fact, it is not at all clear just where or how Leibniz is supposed to have stated this principle, even though a great many philosophers assume that he did state it somewhere and somehow. (Feldman, 1970, p. 510)

16 The most indisputable of all beliefs is that contradictory statements are not at the same time true (Met. 1011b13-4). It is impossible for any one to believe the same thing to be and not to be, as some think like Heraclitus says. (Met. 1005b23-5) A thing cannot at the same time be and not be (Met. 996b29-30)

Our text, then, is *Metaphysics* Γ, 1003*a* 21–1012*b*34 (future references are abbreviated). The arguments we are concerned with occur largely in paper 4, but let us start with a quick look at the whole book. In the first three papers Aristotle explains that there is a study whose job is to investigate the most fundamental features of "being *qua* being", i.e. the properties that all entities have merely in virtue of being entities. It turns out that these are the Laws of Non- Contradiction (LNC) and Excluded Middle (LEM). (Priest, 2006, p. 8)

17 This attitude has not merely persisted, but is actively, as Beall (2004) puts it, "an entrenched 'unassailable dogma' of Western thought" (Beall, 2004, p. 3).

18 According to Ibn Sīnā, a demonstration transfers *truth, certainty and necessity* from the premises to the conclusions. Premises or *first principles* are generally divided into two parts, the first principles for *all sciences* are called *common principles* (*al-uṣ ūl al-mutaʿārafa*), and the first principles for every special science called *postulates* (*al-uṣūl al-mawḍūʿa*). For example, "whole is bigger than [its] part" or "contradiction is impossible", etc are common principles, and "the shortest line between two points is a straight line" is a postulate for the science of geometry. Ibn Sīnā has a vast investigation in his different writings on the *ways* common principles are acquired by the mind. A class of these common principles the called as *awwaliyyāt*, are acquired *only* through the intellective faculty. These are propositions that are *obvious* for the intellective faculty and accepting them is *necessary*. The above two examples of the common principles are of this category. Contrary to the common principles, which are certain, the postulates are *susceptible of doubt* (*mashkūk*). (M. Ardeshir, 2008, p. 58)

19 Exceptions can be found in Western intellectual history such as Priest has noted:

With the exception of Hegel and his fellow-travellers, and whilst Aristotle's opinion on nearly every other matter has been overturned—or at least challenged—nearly every Western philosopher and logician has accepted the authority of Aristotle on this matter. There is hardly a defence of the Law since Aristotle's, worth mentioning. (Priest, 2006, p. 7)

wards the predominant mode of thought in most of the Anglosphere. More relevantly, the laws of logic have been unequivocally adopted and upheld in high regard by the founding fathers of classical logic, such as Frege and Russell. For Frege the laws of logic were "laws

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However, attempting to locate personalities or remote instances within the Islamic intellectual history proves to be unviable. Allow me to explain my line of inquiry in this regard. After having failed in my own pursuit in attempting to find some material/resources on this matter, I contacted the following academics; Khaled El-Rouayheb, Tony Street, Peter Adamson and Ahmed Alwishah with the following question:

I was wondering if you could kindly direct me to some reading material which discusses the principles/laws of logic within medieval Arabic logic. More specifically I am looking for writings on certain Arabic logicians who may not have subscribed to the principles/laws of logic. Moreover, I would be equally interested in discussions on those logicians who did subscribe to them. I guess I'm looking for a little more beyond the obvious in terms of discussions on why most Arab logicians would have accepted the principles/laws of logic and why, if any, some rejected them. In order to explain my query a little better, take the law of non-contradiction. Although many of Aristotle's views have been contested since antiquity, the law of non-contradiction, for the most part of history, has championed an authoritative role. Priest (2006) sums this up rather succinctly in the following manner:

With the exception of Hegel and his fellow-travellers, and whilst Aristotle's opinion on nearly every other matter has been overturned—or at least challenged—nearly every Western philosopher and logician has accepted the authority of Aristotle on this matter. There is hardly a defense of the Law since Aristotle's, worth mentioning. (Priest, 2006, p. 7)

According to Priest (2006) Aristotle's view regarding the law of non-contradiction has been upheld as high orthodoxy since the medieval times. The West, in particular, has considered this law to be incontrovertible to the extent that they have not felt the need to provide any further evidence for it. This attitude has not merely persisted, but is actively, as Beall (2004) puts it, — "an entrenched 'unassailable dogma' of Western thought" (Beall, 2004, p. 3). Hegel and Heidegger are probably the only few philosophers in recent Western history who out-rightly reject the law of non-contradiction with regards to their views on motion and being respectively. However, more recently with the advent of non-classical and paraconsistent logics the law of non-contradiction has encountered a more open rejection making way for a different system of logic altogether.

Returning to my query, I am interest in whether there were any Arab logicians during the medieval period who attempted to engage in a type of logic while rejecting the law of non-contradiction. This needn't mean I'm looking to impose a strict form dialetheism or paraconsistency upon certain thinkers who (if any) upheld contradictory views of some kind on the bases of metaphysical reasons - although there is a recent paper by Zolghadr (2018) which suggests that Ibn Arabi's Wahdat al-Wujud was a dialethic theory. I am more so interested in knowing if there were any Arab logicians who engaged in a logic which did not subscribe to the law of non-contradiction - at least a type of logic which did not uphold the law of non-contradiction to be a self-evident and/or necessary logical law/truth. Moreover, I would also be interested in reading about why Arab logicians subscribed to the law of non-contradiction aside from resorting to the reasons given by Aristotle in his metaphysics.

I received the responses from all four the academics I contacted. What was interesting about three of the responses out of the four was that they each expressed that they were unaware of any Arab logicians who denied the PNC (principle of non-contradiction). I have quoted the responses below for the sake of accuracy:

Tony street responded by saying "I don't think I've ever seen a denial of the PNC; I guess Khaled El-Rouayheb's work would come closest to that (on the part of a logician)." Khaled El-Rouayheb responded by sasying "I am not aware of Arabic logicians who question the principle of non-contradiction outright. Some scholars who discussed the liar paradox were willing to suggest that "What I say is false" is both true and false, though this appears to have been a minority opinion. You may wish to contact Professor Ahmed Alwishah who has written extensively on the liar paradox in the Arabic tradition." Ahmed Alwishah responded by saying "That is a wonderful inquiry and something worthy to be investigated. I do not know any materials written on this subject matter and I will be interested to know that."

on which all knowledge rests"[20] while for Russell they were central for being able to obtain coherence[21].

One notable way to appreciate classical logic's commitment to the laws of logic is to contrast it with paraconsistent logic[22]. Priest (2007) pertinently states that "perhaps the major motivation behind paraconsistency in the modern period has been the thought that there are many situations where we wish to handle inconsistent information in a sensible way – and specifically, where we have to infer from it" (Priest, 2007, p. 129)[23]. Paraconsistency is thus a host of logical systems (Logics of Formal Inconsistency – LFIs) which engages

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20 Frege in a famous passage is quoted to have said that "the laws of truth are not psychological laws: they are boundary stones fixed in an eternal foundation, which our thinking can overflow, but never displace" (Frege quoted in Rumfitt, 2015, p. 1). Rumfitt (2015) goes on to clarify that for Frege the 'laws of truth' *are* the 'laws of logic'. The laws of logic, as Frege depicted them, are to be understood as entrenched 'boundary stones' that are set in an 'eternal foundation'. It's not exactly clear what he means by an 'eternal foundation' here. Although according to Beaney (1996), "Frege assumed that these laws were transcendentally given" (Beaney, 1996, p. 15).

Frege wrote that the meaning of the word 'true' is spelled out in the laws of truth; and he put the same point also this way: the laws of logic are nothing other than an unfolding of the content of the word 'true'. (Diamond, 2015, p. 65)

21 The other objection to this definition of truth is that it assumes the meaning of 'coherence' known, whereas, in fact, 'coherence' presupposes the truth of the laws of logic. Two propositions are coherent when both may be true, and are incoherent when one at least must be false. Now in order to know whether two propositions can both be true, we must know such truths as the law of contradiction. For example, the two propositions, 'this tree is a beech' and 'this tree is not a beech', are not coherent, because of the law of contradiction. But if the law of contradiction itself were subjected to the test of coherence, we should find that, if we choose to suppose it false, nothing will any longer be incoherent with anything else. Thus the laws of logic supply the skeleton or framework within which the test of coherence applies, and they themselves cannot be established by this test. (Russell, 2008, p. 81)

22 The question at the intersection of truth and falsity is whether it (the intersection) could be non-empty but non-trivial—whether *some but not all* contradictions could be true. Classical logic, and intuitionistic logic, for that matter, give a swift answer: No. In each such logic, the so-called 'independent argument' goes through:

(1) Assume that $A \wedge \neg A$ is true
(2) By (1) and Simplification, A is true
(3) By (2) and Addition, $A \vee B$ is true
(4) By (1) and Simplification, $\neg A$ is true
(5) But, then, by (3), (4), and Disjunctive Syllogism, B is true

The upshot is that any contradiction is explosive if each of the foregoing steps is valid. Paraconsistent logics, by definition, are not explosive. A consequence relation ⊢, however defined, is said to be *explosive* if $A, \neg A \vdash B$ holds for arbitrary A and B. A consequence relation is said to be *paraconsistent* if and only if it is not explosive. (Beall, 2004, p. 5-6)

23 As Priest, Tanaka and Weber say

The contemporary logical orthodoxy has it that, from contradictory premises, anything canbe inferred (…) Inconsistency, according to received wisdom, cannot be coherently reasoned about (…) Paraconsistent logic challenges this orthodoxy. A logical consequence relation is said to be paraconsistent if it is not explosive. [24]

Similarly, in the recent book by Carnielli and Coniglio, it is said that Paraconsistent logics are able to deal with contradictory scenarios, avoiding triviality by means of the rejection of the Principle of Explosion. [6, p. 3]

In a nutshell, as Ripley puts it paraconsistency is a nonentailment claim. [28, p. 773]

Barrio, Pailos and Szmuc, 2018, p. 90)

with inconsistent information while retaining as much of the classical machinery as possible. The primary method in virtue of which it engages with inconsistent information and which distinguishes it from classical logic is its non-compliance of the law of non-contradiction.

In classical logic a theory Γ is by definition *consistent* if no pairs of contradictory propositions $\alpha, \neg\alpha$ are deducible from Γ. If, however, a pair of contradictory propositions $\alpha, \neg\alpha$ are deducible from Γ then it is inconsistent. It is evident that being consistent and inconsistent in this particular respect is contingent upon the compliance of the law of non-contradiction. Violating the law of non-contradiction would allow for anything to logically follow. This is more commonly known as the Principle of Explosion which is referred to as *ex contradictione sequitur quodlibet* in Latin. The principle of explosion in classical logic is a logically valid inference[24]. This means that triggering a contradiction would logically entail everything: $\alpha, \neg\alpha \models \beta$, for all α and β. Given that anything logically follows from a contradiction it would imply triviality. Paraconsistent logical systems, however, overcome this issue by engaging with contradictions in a manner where explosion is considered as an invalid inference[25]. On this view a contradiction would not logically entail everything: $\alpha, \neg\alpha \not\models \beta$. Consequently, paraconsistent logic can essentially be considered as a non-entailment claim. This shift from classical (two-valued) logic not only opens up the prospect for paraconsistent logic to engage with inconsistent information, but it does so within the province of rationality since it circumvents triviality. The primary difference between classical logic and paraconsistent logics can thus be reduced to conforming to and defying the law of non-contradiction respectively.

It is therefore evident that laws of logic are fundamental to the functionality of classical logic – much like a defining feature. The significance that is granted to the laws of logic can be appreciated in virtue of syntactical consistency – by which I mean the sort of structure and form that allows us to determine what follows from what. The laws of logic act as theoretical guarantors in this sense that warrant syntactical consistency within the system of classical logic. If in this case the logical system in question, namely classical logic, encounters a syntactical inconsistency of the form p and $\neg p$ for some proposition p[26] it would render it unsound and trivial. For classical logic to be able to function in this codified manner and distinguish logical consistencies from inconsistencies is crucial to its theoretical integrity for at least two reasons. Jacquette (2010) presents these as follows:

An inference offered from within an inconsistent logic is necessarily unsound, and hence deprived of the possibility of establishing the truth of any proposition by logical

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24 It is true that Explosion is a valid principle of inference in standard twentieth-century accounts of validity, such as those of intuitionism and the inappropriately called 'classical logic'. (Priest, 2004, p. 24)

25 Paraconsistent logics are logical systems that rebel against the classical principle, usually dubbed *Explosion*, that a contradiction implies everything, or that from a contradiction, everything follows. (Barrio, Pailos and Szmuc, 2018, p. 89)

26 In the standard view of a paradox, if plausible premises yield a contradiction, given accepted principles of inference, then either premises or concepts employed in the paradox must be rejected. This is so because, in the standard view, if the premises yield a contradictory conclusion, classical logic impels us to reject one or more of the premises, or to reject the conclusion as incoherent, or the paradox set as invalid. (Armour-Garb, 2004, p. 122)

demonstration. Secondly, an inconsistent classical logic is trivial, in the sense that any proposition whatsoever can be validly deduced from an inconsistent assumption set. (Jacquette, 2010, p. 20)

1.3 An intuitive appeal to the laws of logic

Aside from these reasons there appears to be a more practical motive which seemingly makes a strong appeal to our 'intuitive sense of deductions'[27] as to why classical logic is earnestly committed to the laws of logic. Locke speaks of a very similar type of intuition that grants man a form of logical capacity allowing him to exercise reason while hardly possessing any knowledge of how to construct a syllogism[28]. We may be able appreciate this when considering a child, who despite having had no schooling in formal logic, has his/her very first encounter with arbitrating in matters of syntactical consistency. Given that such a child has had at least some exposure to an environment which is indicative of deductive reasoning, he/she shall possess a "pre-theoretical but still developed sense of what follows from what" as Rumfitt (2015) puts it. It is this particular intuitive sense of deduction that instinctively grants an individual the aptitude in being able to appreciate syntactical consistency. It acts as the pre-theoretical foundation against which one can determine as to whether a given logical system is syntactically consistent or not. This seems to be a strong enough reason to have persuaded Rumfitt (2015) that classical logic occupies a default status[29].

Classical logic, for Rumfitt (2015), is therefore codified by a set of foundational principles which conform to our 'intuitive sense of deductions'. The conformity between such principles and our 'intuitive sense of deductions' allows us to acknowledge the kind of structure and form in virtue of which we are able to determine what follows from what, namely syntactical consistency. Any attempt in obtaining this type of consistency would necessitate conforming to the laws of logic. Simply because defying the laws of logic would lead to a syntactical inconsistency. Thus, the laws of logic would occupy a crucial role if they are thought to conform to our 'intuitive sense of deductions'. Of course, whether this 'conformity' is one which completely corresponds to our 'intuitive sense of deductions' or is one which bears epistemological gaps is an interesting question[30]. Neerthless, the idea

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27 This particular term is used by Rumfitt (2015).

28 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, paper xvii, §4.

29 This, it seems to me, provides the strongest reason for according default status to classical logic, for—with only one class of exceptions—classically valid arguments conform to our intuitive sense of deductions whose conclusions follow from their premises. Setting aside the exceptions, the classical natural deduction rules seem, when we first meet them, to codify norms of deductive reasoning that we have implicitly followed for years. (Rumfitt, 2015, p. 15)

30 Weininger, however, thinks that obeying the laws of logic is something we ought to do precisely because it belongs to the strict moral duties we have toward ourselves. He thereby holds that logic is intrinsically categorically normative (and thus falls under 4A), but for reasons quite different from those found in the moral science conception of logic.

According to the moral science conception, logic is intrinsically categorically normative because it is based on rationality itself (hence rationality is intrinsic to logic) and is also an *integral part of* human morality, namely the part that consists in justifying moral judgments and decisions, including direct moral arguments and reflective equilibrium. (Hanna, 2006, p. 205-206)

that there exists some kind of association between the laws of logic and our 'intuitive sense of deductions' ostensibly grants a significant status to the laws of logic. This status is particularly espoused by classical logic on the basis that the laws of logic are fundamental axioms in virtue of which it operates.

Yet, there must be more substance to why the laws of logic are so implicitly compelling to our 'intuitive sense of deductions'. Surly, being able to determine syntactical consistency must yield something of significant cognitive worth. This cognitive worth needn't be confined to the utility and practical applications of ideas in the actual world[31]. Instead, it ought to be of the kind which also encompasses abstract notions that are philosophically conceivable and thus intelligible – granting one a sense of cognitive satisfaction[32]. One such worth is being able to make sense of things. Rescher (2017) makes an unequivocal association between philosophy in general and the project of making sense of things. He does so while inferring that the abandonment of philosophy would imply withdrawing from the project of making sense of things[33]. Moore (2017) purports a similar view. For Moore (2017) "philosophy is an attempt, by humans, from their unique position in the world, to make sense both of themselves and of that position." (Moore, 2017, p. 45)

However, the phrase 'make sense' is somewhat ambiguous and requires elucidation. Moore appreciates this by referring to it as "a polymorphous term". Elsewhere, while speaking on metaphysics, Moore (2012) draws on the meaning of the phrase 'to make sense of things' in a little more detail. He proposes possible ways in which the phrase can be comprehended, such as the "meaning", "purpose", or "explanation" of something[34]. Nonetheless, whatever understanding one derives from such synonyms, it would undoubtedly be myriad. Given this, Moore (2012) goes on to make an important distinction between the ways in which the term 'to make sense' ought to be apprehended.

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[31] It should be noted that I differ with Putnam (1994) on this matter. According to Putnam (1994) to give sense to a formal system is not only to make it intelligible and be able to interpret it, but to be able to do these things so it can be applied. Therefore, for Putnam (1994) being able to specify the application of a formal system is also how 'sense' ought to be characterised. I am saying that we need not have an application for a formal system for it to be sensical. Being intelligible is a sufficient condition for having sense.

[32] The discipline [philosophy] seeks to bring rational order, system, and intelligibility to the often confusing diversity of our cognitive affairs enabling us to find our way about in the world in a practically effective and cognitively satisfying way. (Resecher, 2017, p. 33)

[33] To those who are prepared simply to abandon philosophy, to withdraw from the whole project of trying to make sense of things, we can have little to say. (How can one reason with those who deny the pointfulness and propriety of reasoning?) (Rescher, 2017, p. 33)

[34] The 'sense' in question may be the meaning of something, the purpose of something, or the explanation for something. This is connected to the fact that a near-synonym for 'make sense of' is 'understand' and the range of things that someone might naturally be said to understand (or not) is both vast and very varied. It includes languages, words, phrases, innuendos, theories, proofs, books, people, fashions, patterns of behaviour, suffering, the relativity of simultaneity, and many more. Thus making sense of things can embrace on the one hand finding something that is worth living for, perhaps even finding the meaning of life, and on the other hand discovering how things work, for instance by ascertaining relevant laws of nature. I do not want to draw a veil over *any* of these. The generality of metaphysics will no doubt prevent it from embracing some of them, but that is another matter. "Moore, 2012, p. 5)

When 'make sense' is used intransitively, there is a further range of associations. It is then equivalent not to 'understand' but to 'be intelligible', 'admit of understanding', perhaps even 'be rational'. (Moore, 2012, p. 5)

In light of Moore's (2012) view, it not only seems befitting, but somewhat intuitive, to conceive of 'making sense' in virtue of being rational[35] – particularly within the purview of philosophy. Any attempt to rationalise in the absence of making sense, or vice versa, in the most basic forms, would apparently lead to an inconsistency. 'Inconsistency' may be understood as antithetical to rationality. In this sense it would be an equivalent term to 'irrationality'. Irrationality, as Davidson (2004) puts it, "is a mental process or state—a rational process or state—gone wrong" (Davidson, 2004, p. 169). Rationality's going wrong would imply its failure to fulfil its essential role of reasoning. In this case rationality would be contrasted with 'a-rational' or 'non-rational'[36]. A failure to reason in ways that unequivocally ensues forms of irrationality would be indicative of nonsensicalness.

Classical logic is certainly a predominant candidate that offers to express rationality in a manner that is not just consistent but representative of mathematics[37]. Take the elementary principles of mathematics such as the ones expressed by basic arithmetic, "$7 + 4 = 11$" for instance. Arithmetic calculations of this kind are more than often considered as necessary truths and a priori. Mathematical propositions such as this warrant an overwhelming degree of certainty. It is in the same way that classical logic is established upon elementary principles, namely the laws of logic. These are also considered as necessary truths and a priori. However, the connection between mathematics and logic is more profound than merely sharing elementary principles that are considered to be necessary truths and a priori. Perhaps this can be best appreciated in acknowledging how Frege began assigning numerical values to propositional statements. This was a novel move by Frege in which he considered propositional statements to have an equivalent utility that is represented by mathematical functions which would yield truth-values. It was precisely this use of function-argument analysis that laid the foundation for classical logic having replaced the subject-predicate analysis of Aristotelian logic.

Given the intertwined nature of mathematics and classical logic; defying the principles upon which they have been established would, by definition, obstruct syntactical con-

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[35] Rationality, in broader terms, is divided into theoretical and practical perspectives. A theoretical perspective of rationality focuses on the epistemology of belief. It attempts to determine what qualifies as rational and whether it ought to be believed on such accounts of rationality. A practical perspective of rationality focuses on determining which actions, intentions, and desires qualify as rational.

[36] 'Rational' has at least two relevant senses: capable of reasoning ('RATIONAL', contrasting with 'a-rational' or 'non-rational') and: using this capacity properly or well ('rational ', contrasting with 'irrational'). 'Rational', in turn, has a stronger and a weaker interpretation: in conformity with the agent's goals and beliefs ('weak rationality') and: in conformity with the agent's reasonable goals and justified beliefs ('strong rationality'). (Haack, 1993, p. 177)

[37] Formal rationality concerns formal principles of good reasoning-the mathematical laws of logic, probability, decision, or game theory. These principles appear, at first sight, to be far removed from everyday rationality-from how people think and act in everyday life. Rarely in daily life do we praise or criticize each other for obeying or violating the laws of logic or probability. (Charter and Oaksford, 2002, p. 137)

sistency. Mathematical and propositional functions from this perspective would not be able to guarantee the sort of structure and form that would allow us to determine what follows from what. Consequently, such defective functions would no longer serve as a truth preserving system. Conceptual defects of this kind would therefore become a significant hindrance for the classical system of logic in being able make sense of things. In this respect we could think of the laws of logic as fundamental axioms that grant classical logic the theoretical aptitude to be able to make sense of things.

2. These assumptions, i.e. the laws of logic (most notably the law of non-contradiction), constrain our metaphysics.
That is to say that the laws of logic are not metaphysically neutral.

Classical logic is a particular system of reasoning that grants us the sort of structure and form in virtue of which we are able to determine what follows from what – i.e. syntactical consistency. We can also think of this as a method to ascertain inferential/sequential (logical) order that is indicative of validity – the kind with which we make sense of things. This is achieved by adhering to the fundamental laws of logic. However, it is worth considering the cost at which, if any, the laws of logic are adhered to in order to make sense of things. To put it differently, would my attempt in making sense of things by way of adhering to the laws of logic encroach upon my metaphysical understanding or belief about any given matter?

2.1 The cost of making sense
of things in virtue of the law of non-contradiction

Let us explore this question. Take one of the *more* fundamental of the three laws of logic, namely the law of non-contradiction[38]. Suppose that I am committed to upholding this law as being (*necessarily*) true in a metaphysical sense[39]. By this I mean that the same object cannot both have and not have the same property; formally expressed as: $\forall x\, \forall F\, \neg\, (F(x) \wedge \neg F(x))$[40]. This specific version of the law of non-contradiction is ontologically affirming how matters or states of affairs *cannot* be[41]. Despite this, let us say I happen to subscribe to a par-

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38 I shall direct my attention on the law of non-contradiction and not the law of excluded middle or the law of identity. The primary reason for this is that the law of non-contradiction is more fundamental in the sense that the law of excluded can be derived from it in virtue of De Morgan's laws as well as the principle of double negation.

39 The metaphysical formulation of LNC takes a form familiar from Aristotle (Metaphysics 1005b19–20), although my proposed formulation is somewhat weaker, defined as follows:
(LNC) The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect and in the same domain. (Tahko, 2014, p. 239)

40 This can also be expressed as: $\forall x\, \forall F\, \neg\, \lozenge$ (Fx & ¬ Fx); meaning 'for any object x, and any property F, it is not possibly the case that x is both F and not-F'. Or alternatively: $\forall x\, \forall F\ \neg$ (Fx & ¬ Fx) meaning 'for any object x, and any property F, it is necessarily not the case that x is both F and not-F'.

41 "Ontological formulation: *The same property cannot belong and not belong to a single object at the same time.* By 'object' I understand, with Meinong, anything that is 'something' and not 'nothing'; by 'property' I mean anything can be predicated of an object. (Łukasiewicz (1910): 51)" (Berto, 2007, p. 14)

  Moreover, Tahko (2009) has provided a metaphysical interpretation of the law of non-contradiction in which he says,

ticular contradictory belief that I uphold as being true in some sense, which needn't have to be directly about the world as such (I shall go on to demonstrate this very point in virtue of an absolute ineffable God of Islam). Given this, would the law of non-contradiction constrain my metaphysical belief? That is, would my commitment to the law of non-contradiction prevent me from accepting a particular contradictory belief as being true?

It appears somewhat evident that my commitment to the law of non-contradiction imposes a genuine constraint on the way in which I conceive the structure of reality[42]. The law of non-contradiction ontologically prohibits me from accepting/asserting the existence of a contradictory matter or state of affairs; subsequently barring me from accepting/asserting its truth[43]. Given that I am logically proscribed from accepting/asserting an ontological contradiction, it would imply that my metaphysical conception of reality should be insusceptible to contradictions. My adherence to classical logic would thus reveal that it is not metaphysically neutral. This is because my adherence to classical logic, and more specifically to its laws, constrains my metaphysical conception/belief about a given contradictory matter or state of affair. It does so by dictating to me that a contradiction amounts to a logical impossibility; making it necessarily false. Moreover, it insists that a contradiction amounts to trivialism. Accordingly, if I decide not to comply with the law of non-contradiction, it would fundamentally compromise the logical possibility in being able to obtain a consistent idea or belief. It is in this sense that the law of non-contradiction dictates what can and cannot be metaphysically accepted/asserted on the grounds of logical possibility and impossibility respectively. If the law of non-contradiction presupposes any given metaphysical views then it seems fairly reasonable to call into question its role as a neutral arbiter of metaphysical disputes.

At its simplest, the metaphysical interpretation of LNC amounts to this: the entities of the mind-independent reality are plausibly governed by some sort of principles (as otherwise there would be no order in our experience of them), that is, there are some constraints as to what kind of properties a certain kind of entity can and cannot have, and further, some of these properties are mutually exclusive. For instance, a particle cannot both have and not have a charge at the same time, or an object cannot be both green and red all over at the same time. It seems that reality just *is* such that it conforms to the law of non-contradiction. (Tahko, 2009, p. 33)

42 This is a view that Tahko (2009) has defended in *The Law of Non-Contradiction as a Metaphysical Principle*. He opens his paper clearly stating his that "I will also defend the status of LNC as the best candidate for a fundamental metaphysical principle—if there are any principles which constrain the structure of reality, then LNC is certainly our most likely candidate." (Tahko, 2009, p. 32)

43 The so called Bar-Hillel-Carnap paradox (see [3], p. 229) has already suggested, half century ago, the clash between the notions of contradiction and semantic information: the less probable a statement is, the more informative it is, and so contradictions carry the maximum amount of information, and in the light of standard logic are, as a famous quote by Bar-Hillel and Carnap has it, "too informative to be true". This is a difficult philosophical problem for standard logic, which is forced to equate triviality and contradiction, and to regard all contradictions as equivalent, as the following example illustrates. If two auto technicians tell me that the battery of my car is flat, and its electrical system out of order, and add all the (potentially infinite) statements about car electrics, I have an excessive amount of information, including a huge amount of irrelevant information. Classically, this trivial amount of information is exactly the same as the information conveyed by the car technicians telling me a contradiction, such as the battery of my car is flat and that it is not flat. However, if one of the car technicians tells me (among his statements) that the battery is flat, and the other that the battery is not flat, between them they are contradictory, but now I know where the problem is! (Carnielli and Coniglio, 2016, p. 2)

2.2 The ontological status of contradictions

Prior to discussing the issue of neutrality it would be worth briefly drawing on at least two underlying assumptions with respect to upholding contradictions as being true (in some sense) from a metaphysical perspective. The first of these assumptions has to do with the ontological status of contradictions, namely, whether we can determine their existence in reality. The second of these assumptions has to do with *why* our conceptions of reality ostensibly conform to the law of non-contradiction. With regards to the former of these matters Priest (1999) thinks that the observable word, namely all that is observably the case, is only inconsistent if and only if some contradictory instances $\alpha \wedge \neg \alpha$ are both true and observable. However, according to Priest (1999) such inconsistencies are not observable. If any such inconsistencies had been observable then we would have perceived them. Aside from experiencing the odd visual illusion, we do not perceive any such inconsistencies. Therefore, our perceptions of the world are entirely consistent, which in turn, makes the observable world consistent[44]. While responding to Priest (1999), Beall (2000) agrees with his conclusion. Nevertheless, for Beall (2000), the argument which Priest (1999) employs in arriving at his conclusion is flawed. The particular objection which Beall (2000) focuses on in demonstrating this flaw is as follows:

> OBJECTION: We can grant, with Priest, that if there were inconsistencies in the observable world – for example, if α $\neg \alpha$ were in the observable world – then such inconsistencies *could be* seen. After all, being such that *p could be seen* is just what it is for *p* to be *observable*. Thus, if something is 'in the observable world', then it *could be* seen. That is not at issue. The real trouble is that Priest makes a much stronger claim: namely, that if $\alpha \wedge \neg \alpha$ were in the observable world, it *would be* seen. This, however, doesn't follow; 'can' simply does not imply 'would'. For this reason, Priest's argument fails. (Beall, 2000, p. 114)

The point at which Priest (1999) assumes that 'can' implies 'would' is where his argument breaks down. More generically however, there are at least three claims that are all in some way problematic with Priest's (1999) argument. Beall and Colyvan (2001) have summed these claims up in the following manner:

> If there are observable contradictions, we would observe them;
> We would recognise an observable contradiction if we saw one; and
> We do not see any contradictions.
> (Beall and Colyvan, 2001, p. 564)

The first of these claims is conditional. That is, we can only grant the existence of contradictions, namely instances of $\alpha \wedge \neg \alpha$, *if* they are observed. The second of these claims is probably the most crucial of the three. It claims that we are in an epistemological position to be able to recognise and identify contradictions if we saw them. Undermining this claim would weaken the first and third claim since it would question our epistemological ability in perceiving (or more broadly, knowing) the ontological status of contra-

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44 Priest's argument is as follows: Consider the observable world, i.e., all that is observably the ease. If there were inconsistencies in this, it would follow from the above that we would perceive them. But apart from the odd visual illusion, we do not: our perceptions of the world are entirely consistent. Hence, the observable world is consistent. (Priest, 1999, p. 444)

dictions. The third of these claims inferentially follows from the second. We would only be in a position to affirm the third claim given the second claim. However, as Beall (2000) puts it, even if we accept the first of these claims (for argument sake), why should we accept the second of these to be true. In order to be in a position where we can know or epistemologically verify that we have not observed any contradictions would imply that we have at least some idea how they look like. Yet, I don't think we can know or epistemologically verify how contradictions would actually look like – even if we did see them somehow. This position needn't imply that we ought to rule out their existence (intrinsically) in any conclusive sense either[45]. Thus, to determine the existence/ontological status of contradictions in virtue of our epistemological ability in observing them seems a little over presumptuous on behalf of Priest (1999).

2.3 Why our conceptions of reality
conform to the law of non-contradiction

Given our epistemological inability to know and thus determine the existence/ontological status of contradictions, it leaves open the possibility of their existence (intrinsically). Of course such a possibility (at least on this account) is established on our epistemological inability to conclusively rule out their existence altogether. Nevertheless, the mere possibility of the existence of contradictions in themselves is sufficient to invalidate the necessary truth of the law of non-contradiction. In this case the law of non-contradiction would no longer hold as a necessary truth since it could be countered with possible instances of contradictions[46]. This brings us to the latter of these matters, namely, if contradictions can possibly exist then *why* do our conceptions of reality – at least ostensibly – conform to the law of non-contradiction. That is, *why* is it that the way in which we perceive the observable world is such where our observations do not encounter contradictory states of affairs? In response to this question Tahko (2009) proposes that,

> The metaphysical reading of the law of non-contradiction suggests an answer to the question why our observations conform to the principle: because LNC is a true metaphysical principle concerning the world. (Tahko, 2009, p. 35)

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45 I should like to make an important point about the context in which I am speaking about the existence of contradictions. For instance, Arenhart (2018) speaks about the source for contradictions which he has selected to work with. He states,

> Of course, it is still open to the friend of contradictions to look for contradictions in other places, for instance, mystic or religious beliefs. However, as we mentioned before, in this paper we shall discuss only the case of using science as a source for true contradictions (and in doing so, we follow da Costa). This restriction poses no serious drawback on our investigation, it seems, given that science seems to provide our most reliable guide to how the world looks like. (Arenhart, 2018, p. 17)

Arenhart (2018) has clearly chosen to work with contradictions within the context of science. I, on the other hand, have not restricted myself in this sense. In fact, I shall go on to speak about contradictions from a mystical and religious perspective.

46 What does it mean to say that there is a notion of logical necessity? I mean this: there is a sense of 'necessary' for which $\ulcorner$ It is necessary that A $\urcorner$ implies and is implied by $\ulcorner$ It is logically contradictory that not A $\urcorner$. (Rumfitt, 2010, p. 35)

Tahko's (2009) perspective on this matter only qualifies under the condition that the law of non-contradiction is taken to be a (necessarily) true metaphysical principle concerning the world. However, based on the analysis above, the possibility of the existence of contradictions would no longer exemplify the law of non-contradiction as a necessarily true metaphysical principle concerning the world. Thus, in addressing this matter we may assume that we have some kind of inherent '*consistency filters*' – the sort that refine our sensory perception in ways which precludes us from observing contradictions. Priest[47] (1999) and Beall[48] (2006) refuse to accept that we have any such filters. According to Priest (1999) there is no empirical evidence to suppose that there are any such consistency filters. In fact, for him there is every reason to suppose that we do not have consistency filters. Beall (2009) supports Priest (1999) in that we don't have good reason to assume that we have consistency filters[49].

I do not anticipate resolving the issue as to whether our cognitive functionality does or does not imply (or include) consistency filters. Nevertheless, there are at least two alternate points worth considering in this regard. The first is that the manner in which we arrive at any conclusion on this issue would hinge on what exactly we take 'consistency' and 'inconsistency' to amount to. A form of radical semantic scepticism would impede any kind of association, which Sider (2011) refers to as "semantic glue"[50], between any given meaning of the terms and the world. On this view, any given conception of a consistent or inconsistent reality would thus be a representation of how well we configure and align the connotations we technically assign to such words and our perceptions of the world. This means to say that asserting 'the world is consistent or inconsistent' would be positing our conceptions of such terms on the world. While our conceptions of 'consistency' and 'inconsistency' needn't be ones which actually *carves nature at the joints*[51] so to speak. The

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47 Might it not be the case, though, that our cognitive functioning makes it impossible for us to see certain conjoined states of affairs? Specifically, it might be suggested that our perceptual mechanisms impose a 'consistency filter' on what we see. But there is no empirical evidence, that I know of, to suppose that there is such a filter. Indeed, there is every reason to suppose that there is not. (Priest, 1999, p. 444)

48 OBJECTION: Let α and $\sim\alpha$ each be observable. It doesn't follow that $\alpha \vee \sim\alpha$ could be seen--by us, the ones who matter. After all, it may be that we have *consistency filters* the effect of which is that we cannot observe contradictions, despite each conjunct (as it were) being individually observable.

REPLY: Priest considers this objection. His reply is that we have no good reason to think that we have consistency filters, and that we have good reason to think that we do *not* have them. Priest is right, I think, with respect to the former, weaker claim, and few would be inclined to disagree on this. (Beall, 2000, p. 113)

49 . . . His reply is that we have no good reason to think that we have consistency filters, and that we have good reason to think that we do not have them. Priest is right . . . (Beall, 2000, p. 113)

50 One of the "problems" Lewis used his notion of naturalness to solve was the problem of radical semantic skepticism (1983b; 1984). The problem is one in metasemantics. How do words (or thoughts—but let's stick to words) get their meanings? What "semantic glue" attaches them to the world? There are different views about the nature of the semantic glue, but on nearly all of them, the glue doesn't seem to be sticky enough; it apparently cannot secure meaning with sufficient determinacy. Most roughly put: what I mean by 'pig' is surely determined by such facts as that I've always said 'pig' when in the presence of pigs; but why do such facts determine that by 'pig' I mean pigs, rather than pigs-I've-encountered-in-the-past, or pigs-in-my-immediate-vicinity, or pigs-before-2011 A.D.-or-cows-afterwards or ...? (Sider, 2011, p. 28)

51 I take this phrase in the manner in which Sider (2011) has explained it.

second is that it appears somewhat difficult to consider the rejection of consistency filters without an underlying compliance to some form of metaphysical realism (understood in the broadest way). To appreciate this point consider if someone upheld that there is a discontinuity between our perception of the world and how the world actually is. In order to countervail the discontinuity between our perception and the world one could imply that it is possible that we have consistency filters that repel contradictory instances and allow for us to perceive the world in the uniformity that we do. Though even if our cognitive functionality operated with the aid of consistency filters in allowing us to perceive the world in complete conformity with the law of non-contradiction, it would fail to tell us anything about how the world actually is. Instead this would be nothing more than an insight into the sorts of concepts we apply in attempting to describe or make sense of the world. Tahko (2009) happens to reflect upon this very possibility, in which he states,

> But consider what would happen if there really were a fundamental discontinuity between the world and the concepts that we use in describing it, namely, if the world did not conform to LNC. How would we be able to express *anything* about the world if this were the case? Perhaps there is a sceptical worry here which cannot be overcome, but anyone who takes this path would be on a slippery slope towards solipsism: if the consistency of the world is only an illusion, then you cannot trust any of your interactions with it, including your interactions with other people. Surely this is an infeasible position. (Tahko, 2009, p. 36)

There is little doubt that this position appears to be epistemologically intimidating – at least the way in which it is presented seems to suggest so. Falling victim to a radical form of (semantic and/or metaphysical) scepticism or subscribing to sceptically motivated outlooks which inevitably motivate a type of solipsism would no doubt place us in an epistemologically uncomfortable position. Nonetheless, regardless of how daunting the implications may turn out to be, it hardly gives us any substantive reasons to dismiss considering such an anti-realist outlook as a (theoretically) infeasible position. I concede that the implications that stem from a fundamental discontinuity between the world and the concepts we employ to describe or make sense of it are most certainly inimical on many practical fronts such as our interaction with the world and with people. However, representing the system of classical logic (or more specifically the law of non-contradiction) while disproportionately directing its aim at feasibility in being able to describe or make sense of

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Realism about *predicate* structure is fairly widely accepted. Many—especially those influenced by David Lewis—think that some predicates (like 'green') do a better job than others (like 'grue') at marking objective similarities, carving nature at the joints. But this realism should be extended, beyond predicates, to expressions of other grammatical categories, including logical expressions. Let "there schmexists an *F*" mean that the property of being an *F* is expressed by some predicate in some sentence of this book. 'Schmexists' does not carve at the joints; it is to the quantifier 'there exists' as 'grue' is to 'green'. Likewise, the question of joint-carving can be raised for predicate modifiers, sentential connectives, and expressions of other grammatical categories. (Structure is a generalization and extension of Lewisian naturalness.)

I connect structure to fundamentality. The joint-carving notions are the fundamental notions; a fact is fundamental when it is stated in joint-carving terms. A central task of metaphysics has always been to discern the ultimate or fundamental reality underlying the appearances. I think of this task as the investigation of reality's structure. (Sider, 2011, p. i)

the world seems partial. To demonstrate the emphasis on logic's pragmatic function in the world take Sher (2010) for instance. Sher (2013, 2016) thinks that logic requires grounding in both the world and the mind. While exemplifying logic's grounding in reality[52] she examines its pragmatic function in virtue of whether it "works" in the world or not[53]. On this particular point Sher (2010) asserts that a logical theory has to work in the world much like a physical theory. The working of a logical theory, in fact, is more crucial than the working of a physical theory since physical laws are dependent upon logical laws and not contrariwise. Thus, a useful logical theory cannot be in conflict with how the world works.

2.4 Ontological contradictions

The practical appeal to classical logic and more specifically to the law of non-contradiction is overwhelmingly evident – both with respect to its conformity and defiance. Nevertheless, on a theoretical front, I believe more serious attention ought to be invested in entertaining "epistemologically intimidating" positions that are more than often cast off as infeasible. Irrespective of how positions such as radical forms of scepticism and/or solipsism have been sternly tainted as epistemologically reprehensible; to discard them primarily on the basis of their infeasibility (practical application) in the external world seems somewhat un-philosophical. Moreover, the paradoxical implications which are brought about in universally applying the law of non-contradiction to *every* state of affair should equally be considered. This needn't be confined to the more obvious sematic paradoxes but should, more pertinently, explore the possibility of ontological ones also. Consider for instance the following example of reality depicted and espoused by the twentieth-century Japanese thinker Nishida. Bliss and Priest write:

> What emerges from [Nishida's] writings in influential texts such as his *Basho* is the idea that to be an object just is to be enplaced – what it is for an object to be a cat is to lie in the place 'being a cat'. In the same way, a cat lies in the place 'being a mammal, and a mammal lies in the place of 'being an animal', and so on and so forth. This cannot go on forever, thinks Nishida, and there is the ultimate place – the place of all places – which for Nishida is absolute nothingness (which also happens to be pure consciousness). Importantly, if the place of all places is to do the work required of it, it must not, itself, lie in a place; which is just to say it cannot be an object. However, this is where the trouble begins. Indeed, as we have stated above, we know that, according

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52 Sher (2010) uses "world" and "reality" synonymously.

53 (iii) *Logic Has to "Work" in the World*. It is a simple and straightforward observation that logical theory, like physical theory, is correct or incorrect in the sense that it either "works" or "does not work" in theworld. In the same way that the use of, say, defective aerodynamical principles can cause an airplane to malfunction, so the use of defective logical principles can result in its malfunctioning. If in designing an airplane we rely on incorrect logical laws—e.g., the law of "affirming the consequent", or the "new Leibniz law" (see (v) below)—we are likely to cause *drag* when *lift* is needed, a right turn when a left is intended, etc. A flawed logic can cause havoc in an airplane no less than a flawed physics. This is not to say that we have no latitude in constructing our logical (or physical) theory, but there is a very real sense in which our logical theory (like our physical theory) either works or does not work in the world. A useful logical theory has to avoid conflict with the world, just like any other theory. Adopting an influential argument from the philosophy of science, we may say that it would be a complete mystery that logic worked in the world if it were not tuned to the world. (Sher, 2010, p. 355-356)

to Nishida, absolute nothingness does not lie in any place. But it turns out that what this means is that absolute nothingness lies in at least one place, which is the place of not lying in a place! So it turns out that for Nishida, the ultimate ground both is and isn't an object, which means it both is and isn't fundamental. (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 30)

Similar examples of ontological contradictions that are directly concerned with how the world works[54] can be found in thinkers from Europe[55] such as Hegel's account of motion[56] and Heidegger's concept of being[57]. Hegel's account of motion was starkly different to the conventional way of thinking about motion. Naturally it would be considered for an object to be in motion at any given time t to occupy some place at t while occupying different places at times instantaneously before or after t. As intuitive as this scenario may sound it seems compatible with the object in question having zero velocity at t. Hegel had thus proposed that for an object to be in motion at t is for it to be at some place, p, and some alternative place, q, at the same time. This meant that the object would be and not be at place p at time t – while it could be at both places p and q at time t. Heidegger's concept of being somewhat resembles Nishida's depiction stated above. Heidegger was interested in being – that is, what it means to *be*. In his laborious quest he asserted that whatever is *being* does not itself possess *being*. This meant that *being* does not constitute the nature of *being*. Given this, it placed him in a very awkward position on the account of which one could not inquire what *being* actually was. Every time someone attempted to inquire about the *being* of so and so, it meant treating the very thing itself as a *being*. Thus Heidegger adopted the view that *being* is and is not both an object.

2.5 Dialetheism: True contradictions

The universal application of the law of non-contradiction to *all* instances such as the ones noted above would result in paradoxical scenarios[58]. On a practical front this would not

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54 Of course, there are arguments for a contradictory world in famous speculative thinkers such as Heraclitus, Hegel, and Marx; more recently, there are attempts to defend that the world is (in some sense) contradictory in association with Eastern religious beliefs. Deguchi, Garfield, and Priest [12, p.371] go on to say that "[i]t is important that sams̄ara and nirv̄ana are both distinct and identical at this world". So, by looking at the right places, one may find that claims of a contradictory world are not so rare (see also Priest and Routley [25] for further sources of contradictions in philosophical thought). (Arenhart, 2018, p. 13)

55 I am grateful to Graham Priest for directing me to some of these thinkers by having shared with me some of his work on this matter, namely, Metaphysics and Logic: an Observation in Metametaphysics (2018).

56 Thus, see A.V. Miller (trans.), *Hegel's Science of Logic*, Allen and Unwin, London 1969, p. 440, and A. V. Miller (trans.), *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1970, p. 43. For some discussion, see M.J. Inwood, Hegel, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1983, pp. 448 f.

57 See Priest, G. (2002). *Beyond the limits of thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

58 A paradox can be understood as an argument which appears to offer true premises on the grounds of correct reasoning that sequentially lead on to a false conclusion34. This is how Sainsbury understands a paradox,

> . . . an apparently unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable reasoning from apparently acceptable premises. Appearances have to deceive, since the acceptable cannot lead by acceptable steps to the unacceptable. So, generally, we have a choice: either the conclusion is not really unacceptable, or else the starting point, or the reasoning, has some non-obvious flaw. (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 1)

only prove to be unfeasible but leave us with enigmatic situations. These instances of ontological contradictions, nevertheless, are arguably indicative of either metaphysical or semantic dialetheism. Prior to obtaining some idea of what metaphysical dialetheism is in contrast to semantic dialetheism, it is worth acknowledging, more generally, the definition of dialetheism. Priest, who is one of the prominent advocates of dialetheism provides the following definition, "Specifically, a *dialetheia* is a true contradiction, a pair, α and $\neg\alpha$, which are both true (or equivalently, supposing a normal notion of conjunction, a truth of the form $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$). A *dialetheist* is therefore a person who holds that some contradictions are true" (Priest, 2007, p.131). In order to appreciate a dialetheist's position that *some* contradictions are true, consider a *trivialist*. A trivialist holds that *all* contradictions are true. Returning to metaphysical dialetheism, Mares (2004) provides a succinct distinction between metaphysical and semantic dialetheism in the following manner,

> The metaphysical dialetheist holds that there are aspects of the world (or of some possible world) for which any accurate description will contain a true contradiction. Semantic dialetheism, on the other hand, maintains that it is always possible to redescribe this aspect of the world, using a different vocabulary (or perhaps vocabularies), consistently without sacrificing accuracy. (Mares, 2004, p. 270)

To illustrate sematic dialetheism Priest (2006) refers to over-defining a notion. It is this over-defining which gives rise to a dialetheia. To demonstrate this,

> . . . suppose that we define the predicate 'x is an Adult' to be true of persons iff they are 16 or over, and to be false of persons iff they are 18 or under. Then, though the facts about people and their ages are consistent enough, a 17-year-old will be both an Adult and not an Adult. One might hold that all dialetheias arise because of (implicit) definitions of this kind. (Priest, 2006, p 300)

To illustrate metaphysical dialetheism Priest (2006) refers to negative facts, which in my opinion, is a thoroughgoing example of ontological contradictions[59]. Take the case of someone who subscribes to a traditional correspondence theory of truth. For them the truth of $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$ would have to be one which corresponds to facts in an extra-linguistic reality. That is, the truth of $\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$ would have to (somehow) match up with matters of fact or states of affairs in a reality that cannot be adequately expressed with the aid of our linguistic capability. Accordingly, the way in which we would accept positive facts in making positive claims true – by virtue of a correspondence relation – we would equally have to accept negative facts in making negated claims true[60]. The unwillingness to concede negative facts, nevertheless, is somewhat evident[61]. The implication of accepting negative facts would not

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[59] See Arenhart (2018) from pages 17 to 20.

[60] That is, if f^+ is a possible fact, say one that would make α a true, there must be a corresponding one, f^-, that would make $\neg\alpha$ true. (Priest, 2006, p. 300)

[61] Now many have felt a great reluctance to admit the existence of negative facts. For example, in his lectures on Logical Atomism, Russell, who did, in fact, accept the existence of negative facts at the time, writes:

> Are there negative facts? Are there such facts as you might call 'Socrates is not alive'? . . . One has a certain repugnance to negative facts, the same sort of feeling that makes you wish not to have a fact '*p* or *q*' going about the world. You have a feeling that there are only positive facts, and that negative propositions have somehow or other got to be expressions of positive facts.

merely result in an overcrowded ontology but would do so in a way that amounts to being a trivialist. For every fact or state of affair to obtain in the world we would require a non-fact or a non-state of affair and vice versa. This would mean that the world is inconsistent.

Priest's (1999) position on this matter, as previously discussed, is that the observable world is consistent given that contradictory instances ($\alpha \wedge \neg\alpha$) are not observable. Although this may, quite ironically, seem like upholding a conflicting view on the part of Priest, he clarifies his position by making the following subtle distinction,

> Whether the world is contradictory in any more profound sense is not such a straightforward matter. Indeed, beyond the sense I have given to it, it is not even clear what the claim means. It is not uncommon to hear it said, though, that reality itself is consistent; if there are dialetheias, these arise only because our language/ concepts engage with it in an inconsistent way. (Compare this with the view that there is no vagueness in reality; vagueness arises only because of a certain indeterminacy in our language.) (Priest, 2006, p. 299)

2.6 Semantic and metaphysical dialetheism

It's rather evident from this that Priest is not a metaphysical dialetheist as Mares (2004) suspects. Whether this means he is a semantic dialetheist is also unclear – at least with respect to how Mares (2004) has characterized semantic dialetheism. Priest (2006) does not seem to provide a clear take on the matter. In fact he presents himself to be neutral with regards to the distinction between semantic and metaphysical dialetheism[62]. I, on the other hand, am inclined to think that the distinction between semantic and metaphysical dialetheism, at least the way in which Mares (2004) has depicted it, ostensibly overlooks the underlying association of metaphysical realism between the two forms of dialetheism. Mares (2004) distinction between the two types of dialetheism appears to express them in a mutually exclusive manner.

To appreciate my point suppose I subscribe to semantic dialetheism – which for most people may seemingly propose a less ludicrous outlook than its counterpart. On this account I would concede that there are no inconsistencies in things themselves. Instead, inconsistencies arise due to the problematic relationship between our language and the world. Moreover, we are in a position to redescribe such inconsistencies with the aid of differing vocabulary without having to risk abandoning accuracy. Now despite having an alternative vocabulary (such as metatheory[63]) at my disposal, I would consider my conception of reality as inherently consistent. This would be suggestive of a form of metaphysical realism in the sense that even with reality being mind-independent; I am able to epistemo-

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> What is this repugnance? One source of it is, I suspect, the obvious truth that everything that exists *is*. Add to this the thought that negative facts are *not*, and it follows that no such facts exist. This is a confusion, however, as old as Parmenides: negative facts are *not*, in the sense that they ground truths of the form 'it is not the case that so an so', but they *are* in exactly the same way that all existent things are, viz. they are part of reality. (Priest, 2006, p. 53)

62 Mares takes me to be a metaphysical dialetheist, 32 but In Contradiction is, in fact largely neutral on most of the relevant issues. (Priest, 2006, p. 302)

63 Paraconsistent logicians often, in fact usually, use a consistent metatheory to describe their logics. This feature of semantic dialetheism tells us that there will be a consistent metatheory to use and thus in part justifies our using one. (Mares, 2004, p. 270)

logically discern its consistency. Such consistency would not be discernable with the aid of language since that would result in circularity. Allow me to demonstrate this point.

Semantic dialetheism infers a primary inconsistency which arises due to the disparity between the use of my initial language (let this be L^1) and reality. This inconsistency can then be redescribed away with the use of an alternative vocabulary (let this be L^2). Although L^1 and L^2 are both employed to describe and subsequently redescribe the same reality respectively; the "semantic glue" which attaches the meaning of the vocabulary used in L^1 fails to stick in any accurate way. This is discernable on the grounds that it gives rise to an inconsistency. While the "sematic glue" which attaches the meaning of the vocabulary used in L^2 succeeds in sticking in an accurate way. This is discernable on the grounds that it gives rise to a consistency. This would mean that I take the consistency by which I go about discerning the accuracy of L^1 and L^2 as a given. If I did not and I happen to rely on employing L^2 in doing so it would be circular. In this case semantic dialetheism would infer a primary inconsistency due to a disparity between my initial language (L^1) and the very reality which I am only able to discern is consistent by way of employing an alternative vocabulary (L^2).

Alternatively, suppose I subscribe to metaphysical dialetheism. On this account I would concede that there are things in the world that are actually inconsistent. Regardless of the kind of vocabulary I employ, the inconsistency in this case will remain because it is inherent. This would also be suggestive of a form of metaphysical realism since in this case despite reality being mind-independent, I am able to epistemologically discern its inherent inconsistency. The way in which I am able to epistemologically discern the inconsistency of reality is not clear. Resorting to language is clearly not an option in this case. It may be that my conception of reality is once more taken as a given. Moreover, whether or not such inconsistencies of the world would be inclusive of our language would be an interesting question. If it is, it would manifest a profound interplay between the two types of dialetheism.

2.7 The metaphysical neutrality of logic

This brings us back to the issue of neutrality. The possibility of ontological paradoxes or rather possible instances of contradictions within reality would seem to suggest that the law of non-contradiction is not metaphysically neutral. This is because the law of non-contradiction (from a metaphysical perspective) deems ontological contradictory instances/ states of affairs as necessarily false on the grounds already mentioned. Conversely, logic is supposed to be ontologically neutral[64]. It should operate independent of any metaphysical presuppositions. Logic ought not to make any substantive assertions concerning ontological questions such as what there is or whether there is anything at all. To obtain an idea of how an ontologically neutral logic should operate it is worth referring to the "locked room" metaphor as Varzi (2014) has alluded to in the following manner,

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[64] A natural metametaphysical hope is that logic should be able to act as a neutral arbiter of metaphysical disputes, at least as a framework on which all parties can agree for eliciting the consequences of the rival metaphysical theories. An obvious problem for this hope is the proliferation of alternative logics, many of them motivated by metaphysical considerations. (Williamson, 2014, p. 211)

> This conception of logic may be illustrated with the help of the "locked room" metaphor. Logicians must pretend to be locked in a dark, windowless room, and to know nothing about the world outside. When confronted with a statement, they must try to evaluate it exclusively on the basis of their linguistic competence. If they can establish that it is true, then the statement is *logically consistent*. And if they can establish that the statement is true on the assumption that certain other statements are true, then the corresponding argument is *logically valid*. Logical truth and validity are based on how our language works, and on our ability to keep track of the fixed meaning of certain syncategorematic expressions such as connectives and quantifiers. They do not depend on what extralinguistic reality might look like. (Varzi, 2014, p. 53)

This metaphor provides us with a mental illustration of how logic should go about evaluating in isolation of metaphysical presumptions. Moreover, it draws our attention to how fundamental the operations of language are in arriving at logical truth and validity. The prerequisite of language, nonetheless, is to function like a bridge between our thoughts and the structure of the world if it is to be meaningful. That is, if language is to represent our mental states and thoughts about the external world then it must bear some relational property to the structure and features of the world to which it linguistically refers – namely they should be referential expressions. This inevitably connects it with ontology. However, the locked room metaphor seems to suggest that logicians needn't "depend on what extra-linguistic reality might look like" since it is sufficient in being able to arrive at logical truth and validity by whatever linguistic competence logicians may already possess. What seems to be overlooked here is, irrespective of the level of linguistic competence these logicians may possess, it would presuppose at least some form of ontological commitment on their behalf if they are to establish logical truth and validity. Moreover, the locked room metaphor suggests that logical truth and validity of statements is also based upon keeping track of fixed meanings of certain logical expressions, namely logical constants (such as connectives and quantifiers). This means to say that distinguishing the logical constants of a language (from its non-logical expressions) should determine the logical truth and validity of a given statement. Yet, the meanings of such logical constants can be equally taken to represent ontological assumptions.

Accordingly, logic would be considered as a branch of knowledge which possesses a subject-matter of its own contrasted with being viewed as a mere practical instrument which adjudicates between all discourses. For logic to possess a subject-matter of its own would mean that it is like any other branch of genuine knowledge that is capable to make noteworthy theoretical contributions. Consequently, logic would not be topic-neutral in its approach. While if logic is considered to act as a mere practical instrument without any distinct subject-matter of its own then its application and approach to all other discourses would be topic-neutral. This understanding has been contested by Sher (2013, 2016). For Sher (2013, 2016) we needn't think that for logic to be topic-neutral it has to be devoid of its own subject-matter. In fact Sher (2016) has argued that,

> Logic is indeed topic neutral, but being topic neutral is not the same thing as not having a subject matter of its own. Logic does have a subject matter of its own. Its subject matter is logical inference, logical truth, logical contradiction (inconsistency), logical equivalence, etc., where these are very different subject matters from those of physics, mathematics, or psychology. In

spite of having a definite subject matter, however, logic is topic neutral. Its topic neutrality consists in the fact that it applies the same tests of logical validity, logical truth, etc., to inferences and sentences in all area of discourse, regardless of their subject matter. Logic, thus, is a theoretical discipline with its own subject matter, and one of its jobs is to provide theoretical knowledge about it. (Sher, 2016, p. 254)

Thus for Sher (2016) logic is topic neutral despite having a subject matter of its own. From her perspective we needn't think of logic's topic-neutrality being mutually exclusive with it possessing a subject-matter of its own. The subject matter of logic, as Sher (2013) puts it, is very different from other disciplines in the sense that logic evaluates "special conditions under which an inference is logically valid, a sentence is logically consistent, a theory is logically consistent. It tells us whether specific inferences, sentences, and theories satisfy these conditions" (Sher, 2013, p. 159). Although this is a fairly definite characterisation of the subject-matter of logic, the impartial application of these characterisations to all discourses does not appear to provide any justification for it to be topic neutral. Sher (2013) assumes that it does by implying that,

In spite of having a definite subject-matter, logic is topic neutral. Its topic neutrality consists in the fact that it *applies* the same tests of logical validity, logical truth, etc., to inferences and sentences in *all* area of discourse, regardless of *their* subject matter. (Sher, 2013, p. 159)

Irrespective of how impartially pervasive the subject-matter of logic is in terms of universally being applicable to *all* areas of discourse, it does not provide any cogent reasons for why it should be considered as neutral[65]. The fact that logic is applicable to "*all* area of discourse, regardless of *their* subject matter" is hardly a substantial reason to assume that the presupposed ideas by which it determines validity, truth and consistency of all discourses would be neutral[66]. In support of this Sher (2016) expresses a logical equivalence between the neutrality of logic (p) and its application to all areas of knowledge

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65 C. *Topic Neutrality*. We have already explained why the topic neutrality of logic does not mean that logic does not have a topic of its own. Topic neutrality, in the sense applicable to logic, has to do with scope or range of applicability: logic is topic neutral iff it applies to all fields of knowledge equally, regardless of what *their* specific subject matter is. That logic satisfies this condition follows from its generality, which, as we have just seen, follows from its formality. More directly, since logical operators, being formal, do not distinguish between arguments belonging to different fields of knowledge, they apply to all fields, regardless of their "topic". (Sher, 2016, p. 291)

66 I suppose Sher's perspective on this matter is a corollary of her presumption that logic is grounded both in the world and in the mind.

Having these theoretical and instrumental tasks to perform, logic must be subjected to high standards of truth and instrumental success. Epistemically, this means that logic is in need of a foundation, and in particular its claims to truth and success require a critical justification and substantive explanation. Here, however, we seem to be pulled in opposite directions. To the extent that logic's subject-matter is linguistic (conceptual, mental), logic requires a grounding in language, concepts, or more broadly the mind. But to the extent that logic has to work in the world and has to be factually true, it requires a grounding in the world (reality, fact). I.e., to the extent that logic is an instrument for expanding *knowledge of the world* and preventing incorrect depiction of the world by theory (theoretical error), and to the extent that it is charged with saying true things about its subject-matter, it requires a grounding in reality. In my view, the apparent conflict between the need to ground logic in the mind and the need to ground it in the world is just that: apparent. Logic, like all other branches of knowledge, requires a grounding both in the mind and in the world. (Sher, 2013, p. 159)

(q)[67]. According to Sher (2016) the universal application of logic to all areas of knowledge (q) is what satisfies the biconditional in this respect. However, I don't seem to think that is the case since (q) does not necessarily implicate (p). There are two instances in the truth-functional treatment of "p iff q" in which the truth-value between both sentences does not correspond with one another. The instance which arguably is relevant to this specific matter is where (p) is true and (q) is false. As a result of this the biconditional is false.

The universal application of the law of non-contradiction is probably *the* most fundamental criterion by which we make sense of things. Of course, whether or not the law of non-contradiction acting within the purview of classical logic ought to be considered as a system which accurately maps out our rationality may certainly be up for dispute. Although, as Tahko (2009) puts it, "...it is not clear how we could model rationality without LNC, and more importantly, there does not seem to be much evidence of the effectiveness of reasoning that does not conform to LNC" (Tahko, 2009, p. 36). Nevertheless, Sher's position on the application of logic to all areas of discourse would most certainly be inclusive of the law of non-contradiction – as it would equally be of the remaining two laws of logic. This would mean that the universal application of the law of non-contradiction would be a necessary and sufficient condition in allowing for it to be neutral. However, I have already mentioned how the law of non-contradiction dictates our metaphysics in proscribing us from accepting/asserting ontological contradictions. Moreover, I have also touched upon the existence of ontological contradictions and how this is indicative of dialetheism. Both perspectives seem to imply that the law of non-contradiction is not a neutral. That is, the law of non-contradiction does not merely impose a genuine constraint on the way in which I conceive the structure of reality. It goes further in ontologically prohibiting me from accepting/asserting the existence of contradictory matters or state of affairs – barring me from accepting/asserting their truth – while such matters exist.

3. This metaphysical constraint blocks one from accepting an absolute ineffable God of Islam as being logically consistent. This is because according to classical logic all contradictions are false and an absolute ineffable God is a contradictory notion.

In light of what I have drawn on so far, the law(s) of logic – most notably the law of non-contradiction – enacts a constraint on our metaphysics. If in this case suppose someone were to uphold a particular metaphysical belief which is unequivocally contradictory by the standards of classical logic, then such a belief cannot be true under any circumstance, i.e. it would be necessarily false. Consequently, the law of non-contradiction acting within the system of classical logic cannot be neutral. This is because the law of non-contradiction theoretically dictates at least two essential suppositions that ontologically and epistemolog-

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67 . . . logic is topic neutral iff it applies to all fields of knowledge equally, regardless of what *their* specific subject matter is. That logic satisfies this condition follows from its generality, which, as we have just seen, follows from its formality. (Sher, 2016, p. 291)

ically proscribe the contradictory belief that is upheld. Collaboratively, these suppositions can be articulated as: 'contradictions cannot exist therefore believing that they do is false'.

3.1 An absolute ineffable God of Islam

I shall now demonstrate this in virtue of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. This would entail establishing that classical logic – more specifically the law of non-contradiction – blocks one from accepting that the concept of an absolute ineffable God of Islam as being logically consistent. In establishing this claim I shall explore how the theoretical dictates of the law of non-contradiction prove to be inconsistent in ontologically and epistemologically attempting to account for an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Investigating this matter should tie together much of what has been covered in the previous sections. Consequently, this examination shall reveal that the system of classical logic in general is inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. In order to proceed with this I shall begin by providing a synopsis to a specific concept of God within the Islamic tradition, namely, an absolute ineffable God.

The particular view of an Islamic God that I shall work with is one that I borrow from the erudite and illustrious 12th century Islamic theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). As Watt (2014) notably points out, al-Ghazālī was a prime exponent of Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī's (d. 935)[68] theological views. From among al-Ghazālī's theological views regarding God, here is an excerpt that bears a significant relevance to the specific notion of God that I shall refer to:

> God does not inhere in anything, and nothing inheres in Him. He is exalted above being contained by space, and too holy to be bounded by time; on the contrary, He existed before He created time and space. He now has [the attributes] by which He was [previously characterized], and is distinguished from His creatures by His attributes. There is not in His essence what is other than He, nor in what is other than He is there [anything of] His essence. He is exalted above change [of state] and movement. Originated things do not inhere [or subsist] in Him, and accidental [events] do not befall Him. Rather, He does not cease; through the qualities of His majesty He is beyond cessation, and through the attributes of His perfection He is independent of [or does not require] any further increase of perfection. (al-Ghazālī translated by Watt in Renard, 2014, p. 110)

The distinguishing feature which sits at the heart of al-Ghazālī's belief of God is that He is unknowable[69]. Although one may be able to detect subtle sentiments that are indicative of unknowability[70] from the excerpt above, I find that Burrell (1987) has expressed this in a more evident manner.

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68 Al-Ash'ari was born at Basrah. Regarding his date of birth there is difference of opinion. Ibn Khallikan, in his discussion of the life of al-Ash'ari, mentions that he was born in 260 or 270/873 or 883 and died at Baghdad in 330/941 or some time after that. According to Shibli Nu'mani and ibn ʿAsakir (the author of *Tabyin Kidhb al-Muftari,* on the life and teachings of al-Ash'ari), he was born in 270/873 and died in 330/941. He was buried between Karkh and Bab al-Basrah (the gate of Basrah). He was a descendant of abu Musa al-Ash'ari, one, of the famous Companions of the Prophet. (M.M. Sharif, 1963, p. 222-223)

69 See Fadlou Shehadi's Ghazali's Unique Unknowable God (1964)

70 It is worth noting that the sort of unknowability that I am ascribing to the Islamic God is not the kind that is manifested in Ismāʿīlī theology. The feature which distinguishes my idea of unknowability from Ismāʿīlī

Given the fact that "God is a being necessarily existing of Himself (*al-mawjud al-wajib al-wu-jud bi-dhatihi*)" (*Maqsad* 47, M 342–43), it should be clear that this "peculiar divine property belongs only to God and only God knows it." Moreover "it is inconceivable that anyone know it save Him or one who is His like, since He has no like, no other knows it." On such an account, "only God knows God" (*ibid.*). So the resources of philosophy confirm God's uniqueness or *tawhid*: the utter distinction of the One from all else: "everything the exercise of which is possible," which does in fact exist from that One "according to the best ways of order and perfection" (*Maqsad* 47, M 342). (Burrell, 1987, p. 181)

In light of both these excerpts; I shall assert that God transcends all human conceptions of time, space, categories, and our cognitive and linguistic capacities. God is therefore believed to be absolutely transcendent. As a result of such absolute transcendence, I shall infer that in the Islamic tradition[71], God is *absolutely* ineffable. The 'absolute ineffability' that I have in mind is a radical type which eludes all thought and articulation of God. In this sense God would be incomprehensible and inexpressible[72]. Let us term these as conceptual and semantic ineffability sequentially. By conceptual ineffability I mean logically inconceivable and by semantic ineffability I mean linguistically inexpressible. Combining these two types of ineffability would qualify it with an *absoluteness* that allows us to distinguish it from weaker forms of ineffability. Weaker forms in ineffability are types that would be inclined to making some form of concession. This would include granting an ability to either conceive or express a notion of God or both in order to avoid the paradoxical scenario it gives ise to[73].

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that I do not ascribe absolute ineffability to the Islamic God on the grounds that He is devoid of divine attributes or properties. I believe the Islamic God is absolute ineffable in virtue of His essence and *all* His attributes. Al-Ghazālī

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theology is that I don't think anything is impossible for an absolute transcendent God while they assume it is. The distinction that I am drawing on can be better appreciated in the extract below:

From the beginning of their movement in the mid- third/ ninth century, Ismāʿīlī Shīʿites had developed a cosmology that was heavily influenced by a set of Neoplatonic ideas and that interpreted God's divine unity (*tawḥīd*) in a radical way. For Ismāʿīlī philosophers and theologians, *tawḥīd* meant that God is absolutely transcendent and cannot in any way be part of this world. He is beyond being and beyond knowability. God's absolute transcendence makes it impossible that He causes anything in His creation, since that would require some immanence on His part. (Griffel, 2017, p. 219)

71 It should be noted that I do not intend to speak for the whole of the Islamic tradition.

72 Despite this it should be noted that "Al-Ghazālī was convinced that God can be conceived and perceived by humans, albeit only after overcoming much difficulty by education or preparation such as "polishing of the heart."" (Griffel, 2009, p. 263)

73 See Hick (2000)

The most notable reply to Alston's arguments comes from John Hick. As a part of his pluralist hypothesis, Hick maintains that the Real, which shows itself in religious or mystic experiences across cultures, is ineffable and can only be grasped in categories shaped by our respective cultures and traditions. So, if a Christian mystic experiences a personal God while Buddhists experience the non-personal state of nirvana, there is no actual contradiction, since the contradictory predicates only apply to the various personae of the Real, not to the Real itself. The Real itself is beyond the categories of human thought and is, therefore, ineffable; our predicates do not apply to it. Hick, being aware of the problems this claim implies, tries to avoid the paradox of ineffability by making a distinction between formal and substantial predicates. Formal predicates tell us nothing about what the Real is like in itself, substantial predicates do. If, e.g. I say about the Real that it is a possible object of reference, then this is just a formal predicate, while saying that it is a person is a substantial predicate. (Gäb, 2017, p. 3)

has clearly affirmed the existence of God's attributes in the above excerpt. He insinuates that God's attributes are different (in-kind as opposed to in-degree) and unlimited as well as perfect. It would follow that God is absolutely ineffable on the grounds that His attributes are unfathomable whereby we are unable to conceive and subsequently express them. More importantly, it would be incorrect to uphold the view that God is absolutely ineffable exclusively on the grounds that He has no attributes altogether which can be predicated to Him. In this case the non-existence of attributes would leave no room for them to be conceptually and semantically ineffable. Consequently, saying nothing about God would still, bizarrely, express all that there is; only because there is nothing. Thus, Kukla (2005) on this matter has expressed that such an understanding has nothing to do with ineffability.

This particular idea of an absolute ineffable God would be a contradictory one under the rubric of classical logic. Given that classical logic adheres to the laws of logic it would theoretically compel me by way of logical necessity to admit that a contradiction is necessarily *false* and a tautology is necessarily *true*. If I attempt to resist this claim it would defy the laws of logic. Let me explain why. Take the claim 'God is ineffable' (which would be inclusive of the idea of an ineffable God). If God is ineffable, as the claim asserts, then He cannot be conceived of and nor spoken of. Any conception of God and articulation of this conception would render Him effable (describable). The claim, nonetheless, explicitly asserts that God is ineffable (indescribable). This claim is an articulation of a concept; an expression of a thought about an ineffable God. It means that the very claim itself, namely 'God is ineffable' would necessarily imply that He is effable and if He is effable then He is not ineffable. Consequently, the claim 'God is ineffable', though it anticipates expressing that God is indescribable by way of stating He is ineffable, does so at the cost of describing God. This is a self-defeating claim which manifests an evident contradiction[74].

This conceptual dilemma has led many theologians to resort to the apophatic tradition[75]. One of the obvious reasons as to why practitioners of the apophatic method (nega-

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[74] Elsewhere I have referred to this as the paradox of ineffability. A paradox can be understood as an argument which appears to offer true premises on the grounds of correct reasoning that sequentially lead on to a false conclusion (See Olin (2003)). This is how Sainsbury understands a paradox,

> . . . an apparently unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable reasoning from apparently acceptable premises. Appearances have to deceive, since the acceptable cannot lead by acceptable steps to the unacceptable. So, generally, we have a choice: either the conclusion is not really unacceptable, or else the starting point, or the reasoning, has some non-obvious flaw. (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 1)

This understanding reflects in some way as to why I have chosen to express the claim 'God is ineffable' as a paradox. Primarily, it is due to its inherent conflicting nature. The claim attempts to communicate the indescribability of God at the cost of describing Him. Apparently this claim reveals something which, without deeper inspection, seems to say what God cannot be by using a negative prefix, namely, 'in-effable'. This may appear acceptable on the condition that it has been arrived at by apparently acceptable premises. However, what it eventually implies is unacceptable. The semantic implication of the term 'ineffability' infers a direct inconsistency with the claim that is used to communicate it. Therefore, we are left with a claim which fails to assert what it intends simply because it unavoidably does what it says cannot be done.

[75] Al-Ghazālī rejected negative theologies—even among the Sunni groups—and he vigorously opposed such extreme ones. (Griffel, 2009, p. 263)

tive theology) have sought this alternative is to minimise violating the absolute ineffability of God. Restricting themselves to negative claims about what-God-is-*not* may help circumvent anthropomorphic attributions to an ineffable God. Of course this approach might appear to be less prone to the kinds of anthropomorphic issues that arise with positive claims; however, they are not any different when it comes to matters of absolute ineffability. Saying what God is not would not be any different to saying what He is when it comes to matters of absolute ineffability. A negative claim would still be a propositional claim despite inferring what-is-not-the-case. Therefore, negative claims about an ineffable God would be no less different in resulting in a contradiction than positive claims since they are both inferring something by way of predication.

The resulting contradiction that arises from the idea of an absolute ineffable God as well as the claim 'God is ineffable' undoubtedly does so given that the law of non-contradiction is unequivocally defied. The version of the law of non-contradiction which is defied is the metaphysical type (as previously specified). It can be formally expressed in the following way: $\forall x \, \forall F \, \neg \, (F\,(x) \land \neg \, F\,(x))$. This reads as follows: the same object cannot both have and not have the same property. Accordingly, in the case of the contradictory idea of an absolute ineffable God and more specifically the expression of this idea in virtue of the following claim 'God is ineffable' it would be expressed as $\forall x \, \forall F \, (F\,(x) \land \neg \, F\,(x))$. This would read as follows: the same object (God) both has *and* does not have the same property (being ineffable). This approach to a contradiction is not concerned with a single or a pair of statements or propositions. It rather focuses on states of affairs themselves as well as our ability to know them. It is the type of contradiction that seems to be a closer variant of what Aristotle proposed in his characterisation of a contradiction[76]. More specifically, it appears to relate to his concise version of the law of non-contradiction in which he stated "A thing cannot at the same time be and not be" (Met. 996b29-30).

3.2 Evaluating an absolute ineffable God in virtue of metaphysical logical realism

The metaphysical version of the law of non-contradiction specifically bears ontological and epistemological implications. Such implications are more apparently communicated in the metaphysical version of the law of non-contradiction than alternative ones[77]. In the case of an absolute ineffable God these ontological and epistemological implications would respectively manifest the following kinds of consequences. The ontological implication would deny the ontological status of the property of absolute ineffability that both exists and does not exist at any one time. While the epistemological implication would assent to

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[76] The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect; we must presuppose, in the face of dialectical objections, any further qualifications which might be added. (Met. 1005b19-2)

[77] There are a few ways in which a contradiction has been characterised. Grim (2004) has accumulated and assorted nineteen of these characterisations into four overarching types. These include pragmatic, metaphysical, semantic, and syntactic types.

our ability in *knowing* that 'the property of absolute ineffability that both exists and do not exist at any one time' cannot exist. Both of these corollaries would fail to capture the *true* reality of an *absolute* ineffable God since any attempt in doing so would compromise God's conceptual and semantic ineffability.

Allow me to elucidate this point further with the aid of metaphysical logical realism. Together, these implications are suggestive of metaphysical logical realism which is not merely specific to the law of non-contradiction but also of classical logic (of which the law of non-contradiction is a defining feature). McSweeney (2018) has characterised metaphysical logical realism as a view that substantiates the one true logic. The one true logic, as McSweeney (2018) puts it, is either a single or small plurality of logics that is objective. Metaphysical logical realism in this sense adopts the one true logic that is objectively correct in either, directly corresponding to, or being located in, a mind-and-language-independent reality[78]. More specifically McSweeney (2018) adopts metaphysical logical realism to be the conjunction of the following claims:

1. There is OTR [one true logic].
2. What makes the OTR [one true logic] true is the mind-and-language-independent world.
3. The OTL [one true logic] is *metaphysically privileged*: better than any other logic at capturing the nature of reality.

(McSweeney, 2018, p. 2)

If metaphysical logical realism, as characterised by McSweeney (2018), is true (as metaphysical logical realism supposes it is), then it would mean that

...it may conflict with various assumptions that are often made about logic; e.g. that logic is topic neutral (or, relatedly, that it is perfectly general); that it is ontologically neutral (it doesn't commit us to any particular ontology); that inquiry into logic is special and distinct from other kind of theoretical inquiry; that logic is not *revisable*; and that logic is wholly *a priori*, whereas other kinds of inquiry are not. All of these assumptions might be motivated by thinking that logic has nothing to do with the world. (McSweeney, 2018, p. 1)

McSweeney (2018) goes on to clarify that anyone who subscribes to this type of metaphysical logical realism, its logic would not be ontologically neutral. Our logical commitments, in this case, would be ones that either *are* our ontological commitments or ones that are shaped by our ontological commitments. Logic would then be considered to be grounded in the world whereby it reflects the structure of the world. Given this, logic would prove to be a devise with the aid of which we can accurately apprehend and represent the structure of a mind-and-language-independent reality. This would grant the logic in question the aptitude in being able to quantify and express a mind-and-language-independent reality. An absolute ineffable God cannot be stipulated to occupy or be homogenous with such a reality.

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78 Although McSweeney's (2018) characterisation of metaphysical logical realism expresses a satisfactory account from an ontological perspective, it does not appear to pay much attention to the epistemological perspective. Being in a position where a metaphysical logical realist *knows* that a one true logic that is objectively correct to either directly correspond or be located in a mind-and-language-independent reality, cannot be disregarded regardless of how intuitive it may seem.

If God is thought to either occupy or be homogenous with such a reality then it would imply that He falls under the rubric of being quantified by the logic in question. Moreover, it would infer that God bears the same kind of qualitative existence much like everything else that can be captured and expressed by this logic. This would make God's existence qualitatively homogenous with His creation, which would impede on His absolute transcendence.

3.3 Ontological and ideological logical realism

To pursue this matter further it is worth considering the two types of metaphysical logical realists which McSweeney (2018) introduces. These are ontological (metaphysical) logical realists and ideological (metaphysical) logical realists. The former of these is the view that "the one true logic is true in virtue of directly reflecting something about items in our ontology" (McSweeney, 2018, p. 4). The latter of these is the view that "the one true logic is the one true logic in virtue of being a part of the language (ideology) that best captures the structure of reality" (McSweeney, 2018, p. 4).

In line with our inquiry, let us view the law of non-contradiction through the lens of each of these two types of metaphysical logical realism and determine why both of them would fail in capturing the true reality of an absolute ineffable God. The ontological (metaphysical) logical realists would consider the law of non-contradiction as being *true* given its accurate reflection of things in our ontology. This would mean that the structure of our ontology cannot be the kind which bears any contradictions since that would be a clear violation of the law of non-contradiction. This brings us back to the discussion on the ontological status of contradictions, namely, whether we can determine their existence in reality or not. As I previously mentioned on this particular issue, although we are not in an epistemological position to verify the existence of contradictions it does not imply that we ought to rule out their existence. However, reflecting on the idea of an absolute ineffable God while considering the law of non-contradiction in light of ontological (metaphysical) logical realism would mean that it is not an accurate reflection of reality since it harbours an explicit contradiction. This view would not only block one from subscribing to any such reality but infer that its reflection about this kind of reality is accurate – namely it being false. With regards to an absolute ineffable God this would be a violation of His conceptual ineffability.

The underlying consequence in having to oppose this type of ontological (metaphysical) realism in virtue of an absolute ineffable God would be the rejection of the three constituting claims of the one true logic proposed by McSweeney (2018). In other words, given that this type of metaphysical logical realism is a view which substantiates the one true logic, its negation would be a negation of the one true logic. Nevertheless, its negation of the three constituting claims of the one true logic would specifically be *ontological*.

1. There is OTR [one true logic].

2. What makes the OTR [one true logic] true is the mind-and-language-independent world.

3. The OTL [one true logic] is *metaphysically privileged*: better than any other logic at capturing the nature of reality.

The negation of the first claim in this sense would entail that there is *no* one true logic. This would mean that there is no single or small plurality of logics that is objective. By

eliminating the objectivity of a single or small plurality of logics it would be disassociating them from either, a direct correspondence with, or being located in, a mind-and-language-independent reality. The negation of the second claim would entail that there is no mind-and-language-independent reality which makes the one true logic *true*. This would not only entail the non-existence of a mind-and-language-independent reality but would further infer the non-truth of a one true logic. The negation of the final claim would entail that the one true logic is not metaphysically privileged in the sense of adequately capturing the nature of reality. The negation of each of the three claims from an ontological perspective would in essence be a negation of their very existence.

The ideological (metaphysical) logical realists would consider the law of non-contradiction as not bearing out directly upon reality as such but via the medium of our language. Our language (ideology) in this case would best capture the structure of reality while it is in line with the law of non-contradiction. The semantic makeup of our language would thus have to conform to the law of non-contradiction as that would subsequently allow it to accurately capture the structure of reality. Reflecting on the claim 'God is (absolutely) ineffable' while considering the law of non-contradiction in light of ideological (metaphysical) logical realism would mean that the claim is a non-starter. This is because the *claim* 'God is ineffable' consists of an intrinsic contradiction which would fail to bear out on reality. Consequently, this would not allow language to accurately capture the structure of reality. This view would not only block one from subscribing to (the truth of) any such claim but infer that our linguistic capacity is accurate enough to arrive at this conclusion. With regards to an absolute ineffable God this would be a violation of His semantic ineffability.

The underlying consequence in having to oppose this type of ideological (metaphysical) realism in virtue of an absolute ineffable God would also be the rejection of the three constituting claims of the one true logic proposed by McSweeney (2018). Once more, since this type of metaphysical logical realism is a view which substantiates the one true logic, its negation would be a negation of the one true logic. Nevertheless, its negation of the three constituting claims of the one true logic would specifically be *ideological*.

1. There is OTR [one true logic].
2. What makes the OTR [one true logic] true is the mind-and-language-independent world.
3. The OTL [one true logic] is *metaphysically privileged*: better than any other logic at capturing the nature of reality.

The negation of the first claim in this sense would primarily be a negation of the one true logic in virtue of being part of the language that is able to capture the structure of reality. This would mean that the one true logic is not constituted of the sort of language which is adequately able to capture the structure of reality. The negation of the second claim would be a negation of the language which captures the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality. Negating the language which captures the mind-and-language-independent reality would thus mean negating the truth of the one true logic. The negation of the final claim is the negation of the language with which we are able to determine the metaphysical privilege of the one true logic. This would entail that the lan-

guage which is part of the make-up of the one true logic does not adequately capture the structure of reality which attempts to determine its metaphysical privilege. The negation of these three claims from an ideological perspective would in essence be a negation of the one true logic in virtue of the language which best captures the structure of reality.

Thus, both types of metaphysical logical realism, namely, ontological (metaphysical) logical realism and ideological (metaphysical) logical realism prove to be problematic in different ways when attempting to capture the true reality of an absolute ineffable God. An underlying consequence of this problematic approach would be the rejection of the three constituting claims of the one true logic which McSweeney (2018) has proposed. If the one true logic cannot be upheld as a logic which amounts to a form of objectivity in virtue of directly corresponding to, or being located in, a mind-and-language-independent reality in its attempt to apprehend the *true* reality of an *absolute* ineffable God, then metaphysical logical realism would prove to be an inadequate notion in this respect. Of course, the inadequacy of metaphysical logical realism in quantifying and expressing an absolute ineffable God would not inevitably legitimise the use of alternative logics. More pertinently, the inadequacy of ontological (metaphysical) realism and ideological (metaphysical) realism would not contribute in substantiating the existence of contradictions and the unconformity between our language and the law of non-contradiction which allows it to capture the structure of reality accurately (respectfully).

Resorting to a dialetheist logic in this respect would not prove helpful either. As I previously demonstrated both types of dialetheism, namely semantic and metaphysical, bear an underlying association with metaphysical realism. Semantic dialetheism infers an epistemological ability in being able to discern that reality is consistent while metaphysical dialetheism infers the same ability in discerning that reality is inconsistent. Taking reality to be mind-and-language-independent while possessing the epistemological ability in discerning that reality, irrespective of whether it is considered as consistent or inconsistent, is clearly suggestive of an underlying metaphysical realism. Thus, despite having the liberty to accept some contradictions as being true in virtue of dialetheism, the epistemological ability in knowing their truth is what is problematic when it comes to the contradictory notion of an absolute ineffable God. This would imply that the nature of truth in virtue of which we are able make this discernment about an absolute ineffable God is either substantive or deflationary. Both prove problematic in the case of an absolute ineffable God.

3.4 Evaluating an absolute ineffable God in virtue of Metaphysical foundationalism

An alternative way to appreciate the inadequacy of metaphysical logical realism is in virtue of metaphysical foundationalism. Metaphysical foundationalism, in its crudest sense, is the thesis that the "overarching structure of reality is one according to which that reality is hierarchically structured (the hierarchy thesis), well-founded (the fundamentality thesis), populated by merely contingent fundamentalia (the contingency thesis), and consistent

(the consistency thesis)" (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 1)[79]. I believe that viewing metaphysical logical realism through the lens of metaphysical foundationalism shall offer a profound insight as to why it ultimately blocks one from accepting an absolute ineffable God of Islam as being logically consistent. In fact, viewing the former through the lens of the latter is not merely to obtain a deeper understanding of the matter in question, instead, I think the former is indicative (at least in some loose sense) of the latter. Allow me to demonstrate this.

McSweeney (2018) says that " . . . what makes the OTL [one true logic] true: metaphysical logical realism, hereafter 'MLR'. This view takes the OTL to either directly correspond to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality or to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality" (McSweeney, 2018, p. 1). Let us bear both of these components in mind that are responsible for making the one true logic *true*. That is to say when the one true logic either directly corresponds to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality or is located in mind-and-language-independent reality it is objectively true. Both of these components, I believe, are indicative (at least in some loose respect) of metaphysical foundationalism. Now consider metaphysical foundationalism. Let us take metaphysical foundationalism (in the broadest sense) to mean that the world has an overarching metaphysical structure[80]. "Of course, causal structure is a kind of metaphysical structure; however, what philosophers tend to mean nowadays when they speak of metaphysical structure is that this structure is induced by relations of ground and/or ontological dependence" (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 4). The distinction between ground and ontological dependence is as follows:

> Relations of ground, say many, obtain between facts, where relations of ontological dependence obtain between entities of any and all categories. So, where one would say that the fact that the weather is miserable today is grounded in the fact that it is pouring, one would say that the shadow ontologically depends on the object that casts it. And where one would say that the fact that the sky is blue or we are in Australia, is grounded in the fact that the sky is blue, one would also say that the fact that the sky is blue ontologically depends on its constituents—the sky and blue-

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[79] . . . there are, in fact, a variety of ways in which one can be a metaphysical foundationalist; with different species of foundationalism involving different core commitments. Although this list is by no means exhaustive, we assume the following to be amongst the core commitments of metaphysical foundationalism *as commonly endorsed in the contemporary literature*.

> The hierarchy thesis: Reality is hierarchically structured by metaphysical dependence relations that are anti-symmetric, transitive, and anti-reflexive.
> The fundamentality thesis: There is some thing(s) which is fundamental.
> The contingency thesis: Whatever is fundamental is merely contingently existent.
> The consistency thesis: The dependence structure has consistent structural properties.

Strictly speaking, in order to be considered a species of foundationalism, a view needs only commit to the the fundamentality thesis: 2., then, is both necessary and sufficient for a view to count as a kind of foundationalism. For proponents of what we can think of as the *standard view*, however, all four theses are necessary, with no one of them being sufficient. (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 2-3)

[80] Of course, causal structure is a kind of metaphysical structure; however, what philosophers tend to mean nowadays when they speak of metaphysical structure is that this structure is induced by relations of ground and/or ontological dependence. (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 4)

ness. When we talk about relations of metaphysical dependence, we mean this term to act as a covering term for both grounding and ontological dependence. (Bliss and Priest, 2018, p. 4-5)

Given this, the two components which make the one true logic *true*, namely, a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality and to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality seem to presuppose ground and ontological dependence respectively. This means, a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality would be suggestive of ground dependence while to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality would be suggestive of ontological dependence. Let me unpack this connection. If the one true logic is taken to be *true* in virtue of 'a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality' then it would require some form of relational property of correspondence between it and it's mapping of that reality. This means that the constructive mapping of reality by the one true logic should bear a direct correspondence with a mind-and-language-independent reality if it is to be considered as true. The truth of the matter would thus be grounded in a correspondence relation that obtains between the one true logic's mapping, which in essence is a logical representation of mind-and-language-independent reality, and the state of affair within that reality (which it hopes to represent). To demonstrate this, if a logical representation of a statement like the one given in the example above, namely, 'the weather is miserable today' is to be a fact (and thus, true), then it must be 'grounded in the fact that it is pouring' which is the occurrence of a particular state of affair within that reality. Consequently, for the one true logic to be true in virtue of a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality it would require ground dependence – the kind which obtains between facts (and states of affairs).

If on the other hand, the one true logic is taken to be *true* in virtue of being 'located in mind-and-language-independent reality' then it would be ontologically dependent upon that reality. Accordingly, for the one true logic to be *true* its constituents would have to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality. That is to say that the truth of the matter would be grounded in the one true logic's constructive mapping of a mind-and-language-independent reality being located in that very reality. As a result of this, the one true logic would not require some form of relational property of correspondence between it and it's mapping of that reality; simply because its mapping would be ontologically situated within that very reality. To demonstrate this, if a logical representation of a statement like the one given in the example above, namely, 'the sky is blue' is to be a fact (and thus, true), then it must ontologically depend on its constituents – 'the sky and blueness'. Consequently, for the one true logic to be true in virtue of being located in mind-and-language-independent reality it would require ontological dependence – the kind which obtains between entities of any or all categories.

In light of the above connection, it can be concluded that both components of the one true logic (a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality and to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality) presuppose both components of metaphysical foundationalism (ground and ontological dependence respectively). The connection between the components of both, the one true logic and metaphysical

foundationalism that has been established above is as follows: a direct correspondence to the structure of mind-and-language-independent reality would be suggestive of ground dependence while to be located in mind-and-language-independent reality would be suggestive of ontological dependence. Metaphysical foundationalism can thus be perceived of as the underlying (or overarching) structure upon which the *truth* of the one true logic is determined. This would imply that metaphysical foundationalism *metaphysically* influences the one true logic, and more specifically the law of non-contradiction (since it's a defining axiom of classical logic in general), in blocking an absolute ineffable God from being logically consistent.

In order to appreciate how both components of metaphysical foundationalism blocks one from accepting the logical truth of an absolute ineffable God of Islam, we need to examine the *truth* of the law of non-contradiction in virtue of both these components. As I have previously demonstrated, the law of non-contradiction within the purview of classical logic enacts a constraint on our metaphysics. This metaphysical constraint theoretically precludes the belief in the existence of contradictions such as an absolute ineffable God. It does so by deeming all contradictions necessarily false. From the perspective of classical logic it means that the law of non-contradiction is not only a necessary truth but has a significant metaphysical bearing on the way we ought to logically adjudicate between believable and unbelievable matters. Given this, the *truth* of the law of non-contradiction requires to be examined. It needs to be determined as to whether the truth of the law of non-contradiction obtains in ground dependence or ontological dependence when attempting to quantify and express an absolute ineffable God. In order to achieve this, I shall first explain what it means to consider the truth of the law of non-contradiction in virtue of both ground and ontological dependence. Subsequently, I shall explain why an absolute ineffable God is not amenable with both ground and ontological dependence. In light of both of these explanations I shall infer the following: if an absolute ineffable God is inconsistent with both constituting features of metaphysical foundationalism, namely, ground and ontological dependence then it cannot be considered as the metaphysical arbiter which determines the logical truth of the law of non-contradiction regarding the same matter.

If the metaphysical version of the law of non-contradiction is considered to be true in virtue of ground dependence then it means that its truth is grounded in a relation that obtains between two facts. These two facts are the law of non-contradiction's quantificational mapping of reality and the actual states of affairs within that reality (which the law of non-contradiction represents). If the relation between these two facts obtains then, according to ground dependence, the law of non-contradiction is true. If on the other hand, the metaphysical version of the law of non-contradiction is considered to be true in virtue of ontological dependence then it means that its truth is grounded in ontological entities and categories. That is to say, if the ontological entities and categories that constitute this reality are not ones which exhibit contradictions – namely they are consistent – then the truth of the law of non-contradiction obtains.

Now if I happen believe in an absolute ineffable God then such a God is not amenable with ground dependence and nor ontological dependence. Essentially an absolute ineffable God cannot be amenable with both ground and ontological dependence since it would

mean His existence (or even the truth of His existence) is inhibited by an overarching meta-physical structure. It would constrain God to the kind of metaphysical structure that is in-duced by relations of ground or ontological dependence. More specifically, if an absolute in-effable God was amenable with ground dependence which happens to obtain in some way; it would mean that there is a relation between matters of facts that are directly about an ab-solute ineffable God. The obtaining of such a relation would be what causes such mattes to be a fact. Moreover, from the perspective of a mind-and-language-independent reality such matters of fact would be of the kind that we could know and express. This would impinge on the conceptual and semantic ineffability of an absolute God since it would subjugate Him in becoming conceivable and expressible within an underlying metaphysical structure. Al-ternatively, if an absolute ineffable God was amenable with ontological dependence which also happens to obtain in some way; it would mean that God is ontologically dependent upon His constituents. The obtaining of such dependence would be what causes it to be a fact. Again, from the perspective of a mind-and-language-independent reality such matters of fact would be knowable and expressible. Thus, much like ground dependence, ontological dependence would also impinge on the conceptual and semantic ineffability of an absolute God since it would infer that God is ontologically dependent upon His own constituents within an underlying metaphysical structure which we can know and express.

For the reasons provided above, an absolute ineffable God is not amenable with both ground and ontological dependence. As a result of this the truth of the law of non-contra-diction cannot obtain in virtue of ground or ontological dependence when attempting to quantify and express an absolute ineffable God. Alternatively put, the underlying incon-sistency between an absolute ineffable God and both ground and ontological dependence cannot then determine the *truth* of the law of non-contradiction when it deems contradic-tions such as an absolute ineffable God as necessarily false. Deeming the law of non-con-tradiction as true in virtue of either ground or ontological dependence under such cir-cumstances would make little sense. This is because the underlying metaphysical structure which determines its truth pertaining to the matter of an absolute ineffable God is itself inconsistent with the God in question.

An interesting corollary that stems from this is that in the case of both ground and ontological dependence, which are components of metaphysical foundationalism, the law of non-contradiction would be constrained. This would imply that there is a metaphysics more fundamental than logic. While for the most part of this section I have been arguing that the law of non-contradiction (within the purview of classical) constrains our meta-physics. This ostensibly implies that there is a logic that is more fundamental than meta-physics. A point of clarification that requires to be made at this juncture is that the con-straint enacted on our metaphysics by law of non-contradiction is in actual fact referring to a metaphysics that accepts the contradictory notion of an absolute ineffable God. In other words, classical logic which is founded upon a realist (naturalist) metaphysics constrains by way of preclusion a metaphysics whish accommodates a contradictory notion of an ab-solute ineffable God. What this reveals is that much of what I have presented suggests that a metaphysics is more fundamental than logic.

However, this is not to dismiss the profound relationship which intimately entwines both metaphysics and logic at a foundational level. I do not hope to entertain this matter here. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that giving precedence and cogency to any one of these over the other can be manifested is various ways[81]. Both perspectives, as Priest puts it, can be turned on their head along with attempting to find 'a dialectical rapprochement between the two'[82]. Moreover, seeking to draw conclusive demarcations between which of one of two deserves to be prioritised over the other is no simple task since both are intimately entangled[83].

4. Therefore, classical logic is inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam.

This, rather neatly, brings us back to the opening section of this paper in which I presented how engaging in a specific kind of metaphysics which determines our ontological commitments has been espoused by classical logic. I demonstrated how espousing this newer (naturalist) metaphysics has functionally departed classical logic from its predecessor, namely, Aristotelian logic. Moreover, I spoke of how classical logic has replaced Aristotelian logic with the use of certain linguistic devices such as quantifiers and bound variables. Such devises grant it further expressive power and allow it to map a reality in the way it has assumed that reality. It is therefore evident that the rise of classical logic and its intellectual prosperity is founded on a metaphysics that proves to be fundamental. The metaphysics which classical logic is founded upon is a realist one (in the broadest sense of realism) which cannot accommodate contradictions. This implies that the functionality of classical logic also cannot accommodate contradictions since it presupposes a *consistent* metaphysics. A direct consequent of this is that classical logic is not metaphysically neutral. Classical logic's bearing upon a metaphysics such as this one would unavoidably shape the way in which it maps reality, i.e. consistently. More specifically, one of the defining features of classical logic, namely, the law of non-contradiction, asserts that matters or states of affairs within this reality *cannot* be inconsistent. If a certain matter or state of affair within this reality happens to be represented as contradictory then it must necessarily be deemed false. Accordingly, this system of logic would prevent one from accepting a particular contradictory belief such as an absolute ineffable God as being true. The underlying metaphysis of classical logic would preclude one from accepting an absolute ineffable God of Islam[84] as being logically consistent.

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81 See footnote 44.

82 See footnote 44.

83 But logic is not only a theory of reasoning. It is also, and to a great extent, a theory of language. At least as a matter of practice, a logical theory includes also an account of the meaning structures that underlie our ordinary discourse, for it is only relative to such structures that a rigorous theory of reasoning can be formulated. After all, insofar as logically valid reasoning must be truth-preserving, logic must tell us something about truth. It mustn't tell us *which* sentences are true; but it must tell us *what it takes* for a sentence to be true. It mustn't tell us what are the truth-makers of a sentence; but it must tell us what the truth-makers of a sentence must be like. And as such logic has a lot to do with metaphysics. (Varzi, 2009, p. 3)

84 I have demonstrated this in the following paper: Ahsan, A. (2019) Quine's Ontology and the Islamic Tradition. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 36(2), pp.20-63.

The overall debate can thus be narrowed down to two conflicting, yet underlying metaphysics. On the one hand we have a realist metaphysics (or any metaphysics for that matter) which cannot accommodate contradictions such as an absolute ineffable God. On the other hand we have a dialetheist metaphysics which can accommodate contradictions. Although as I previously demonstrated, versions of dialetheism are not exactly free from an underlying association with metaphysical realism. Nonetheless, given that classical logic is founded upon the former of these metaphysics it evidently proves inconsistent with an absolute ineffable God of Islam. This means it fails in being able to determine syntactical consistency regarding an absolute ineffable God. Failure in obtaining syntactical consistency would imply a lack of cognitive satisfaction – the kind with which we makes sense of things. Sequentially, classical logic would thus prove inconsistent (not amenable) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Of course this begs the questions as to whether adopting a metaphysics which accommodates contradictions – such as dialetheist metaphysics – proves sufficient in being able to *make sense* of an absolute ineffable God? Since versions of dialetheism are not exactly independent of metaphysical realism the possibility in making sense does not appear any more promising than a crude form of metaphysical realism.

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The phenomenon Sâdhu Sundar Singh (1888–ca. 1929) and its relevance for Christianity in India and Europe

0 On the structure of the article and on the research literature on Sâdhu Sundar Singh (1888–ca. 1929)

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be able to introduce an Indian person who is likely to have an outstanding importance at least in religious respect for a transversal approximation between India and the European West, namely the undoubtedly most important Christian Sâdhu of Indian provenance who has ever lived and worked on the Indian subcontinent, Sâdhu Sundar Singh. In a first chapter, I would like to present the historically fairly reliable data first about his exterior life and work in the required brevity, before in the second chapter of my remarks I try to present the essentials of his personal spirituality. In the third and final chapter, I will try to point out the importance of Sundar Singh's personality and spirituality first to India's religious spiritual world and secondly to Western European Christianity. In doing so, I mainly refer to the still basic study, though in some historical details outdated, on Sundar Singh titled "Sâdhu Sundar Singh. An Apostle of the East and West", published by the Marburg historian of religion and philosopher of religion Friedrich Heiler in four rapidly successive editions between 1924 and 1925.[1] In this context, I must also at least briefly go into the so-called literary Sâdhu dispute between its author on the one hand and some Jesuits and the liberal Protestant Oskar Pfister on the other hand, which arose after the publication of Heiler's study concerning the question of the historical authenticity in particular of the miracle reports in the missionary work of the Sâdhu. While Heiler essentially defended the historicity of these miracle stories, it was fundamentally and radically questioned by his opponents. The entire relevant primary and secondary literature about this issue, to which Friedrich Heiler contributed two more monographs with numerous documentary materials,[2] was gathered and evaluated a few years later by the Protestant missionary Paul Gäbler, in his 1937 doctoral dissertation "Sâdhu Sundar Singh". There in conclusion, Gäbler expressed himself in favor of a relatively critical assessment of these miracle stories.[3] However, since these do

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[1] See F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh. Ein Apostel des Ostens und Westens, München 1924, 4. ed. 1925; Licensed edition and 5th edition Bietigheim-Bissingen 1987 (with reference to this edition this book is cited in my article).

[2] F. Heiler, Apostel oder Betrüger? Dokumente zum Sâdhustreit, München 1925; the same., Die Wahrheit Sundar Singhs. Neue Dokumente zum Sâdhustreit, München 1927.

[3] See P. Gäbler, Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Lizentiatenwürde einer Hohen Theologischen

not play an important role in my intended representation of the life and spiritual teachings of the Sâdhu, this so-called Sâdhu dispute of Western religious studies need not be discussed further here. Regardless, the work of Gäbler constitutes an important reference work in the research of Sundar Singh's life and teaching. The recent research on the biography of Sundar Singh I take from the biographical part of the dissertation by Martin Biehl, published 1990 and titled "The Case of Sâdhu Sundar Singh. Theology between Cultures".[4] Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to take note of the biography of the Sâdhu written by Roswitha Nagel, Sâdhu Sundar Singh. a witness to Christ in the Indian context, Marburg 2004.[5]

1 Basics of the biography of Sâdhu Sundar Singh (1888–ca. 1929)

1.1 About the social and religious background of Sundar Singh

The Sâdhu was probably born in the middle of 1888 in the village of Rampur near Ludhiana in the Punjab in the state of Patiala in northern India. Sundar Singh called himself a Hindu, but he was called in biographies a native Sikh. Both information is therefore compatible because the understanding of Sikhism as an independent religion alongside Hinduism did not become established until the turn of the 19th century. Sundar Singh's father was a wealthy and as a member of the Jat caste a respected landowner. His mother was an educated and devout Hindu who cared for the religious education of her son and his instruction in the scriptures of Sikhism, especially in the Granth, and Hinduism. Sikhism is a monotheistic reform religion that emerged in the Panchab (northern India) in the 15th century. Today Sikhism has 25–27 million followers living mostly in India, representing a higher synthesis of Hinduism and Islamic Sufism. Sikhism accentuates the unity of creation and worships a formless creator god. Another feature of this very spiritual religion is the renunciation of "superstition" and traditional religious rites, which are prevailing in Hinduism, for example. Although the caste system permeates the everyday life of the Sikhs, because it is too powerful in everyday Indian life, it is rejected by the Sikh religion. Sâdhu Sundar Singh's documented rejection of the caste system may therefore have been based on his religious background, that is, on the Sikh religion. The Sikh religion is not based on the observance of religious dogmas, but has the aim to make religious wisdom available for daily routines and practice. Its founder, Guru Nanak Dev (1469–1539), as well as his nine succeeding gurus, that is to say religious teachers and leaders, emphasize in their religious insights, written down in the sacred work of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, their understanding of transcending beyond all individual religions. Therefore, in terms of content, they also distance themselves from the dominant religious traditions of their time, especially Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The

Fakultät der Universität Leipzig, vorgelegt von Paul Gäbler, Leipzig 1937; see also the same, Sundar Singh, in: Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon – Kirchlich-theologisches Handwörterbuch, sixth volume Sh – Z, third, completely revised edition, C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen 1962, Spp. 526f.; see also Ernst Pulsfort: Sundar Singh, in: Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon (BBKL). Band 11, Herzberg 1996, Spp. 263–267.

4   See Martin Biehl, Der Fall Sâdhu Sundar Singh. Theologie zwischen den Kulturen (Studie zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums, Bd. 66), Frankfurt a.M./Bern/New York/Paris 1990, Teil II, pp. 101–171.

5   Cf. Roswitha Nagel, Sâdhu Sundar Singh. Ein Christuszeuge im indischen Kontext, Marburg 2004.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Panjabi: ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ [Guru Granth Sāhib Jī]) is the sacred Scripture of the Sikhs. It is written in the Gurmukhi script and has 1430 pages. Govind Singh (1675–1708), the tenth and last human Guru of Sikhism, had appointed the scripture as his successor in 1708 and raised it to the eternal guru. The script is also known as the Adi Granth ([Ādi Granth] = ‚primal-book‘).The study of Adi Granth as the key to bliss became the most important religious duty of every Sikh. While the first gurus or religious leaders of the Sikh religion were still "fakirs," meaning "poor" in the meaning of hiking saints, that is, as the medieval Indian term for it was, "Sâdhus," the later gurus took predominantly a warlike spirit, in particular the tenth and final successor of Guru Nanak named Govind Singh, especially in violent clashes with Muslims. Since then, all Sikhs had to take surname Singh (Sanskrit "simha", "lion") behind their personal name to express the martial sense, but also the equality and brotherhood of all Sikhs. That was the same with Sâdhu Sundar Singh. The teachings of the Sikhs established in the Adi-Granth are a decided monotheism with a strong pantheistic impact. Sikhism shares with Islam the vehement emphasis on the one-God-faith. So it is said in the obligatory creed of the Sikhs, which goes back to the founding guru Nanak and which has to be spoken by every Sikh as a morning prayer: "It's only one God. His name is the truth. He is the Creator [...]. The truth is, the truth was and the truth will be." This one God is regarded as transcendent and at the same time immanent and omnipresent in his creation, so that creation is regarded as full of animated living beings and sacred. At the same time, this God who is regarded as identical in his simplicity, lack of properties and absolute transcendence with the conception of God in Indian and Sufi mysticism, is also believed as a personal, loving and merciful Redeemer-God, who is called humbly for forgiveness of guilt and sins. But not only in the concept of God, but also in the redemption-thought of the Sikh religion, personalism and impersonalism argue with each other, as long as the redemption from sin, suffering and rebirth are seen in the Nirvana as the rising and sinking of the individual soul in the supra-individual Brahman. A redeeming power is also attributed to the holy name of God, whose pronunciation should therefore have an eminent healing effectiveness. Even more clearly, in the Sikh faith, the invisible God appears in the form of the holy teacher, the guru. He as the visible representative of God on earth, therefore, deserves divine adoration and worship, faithful submission and unconditional obedience. In this faith in God's revelation in a human being as well as in God's sin forgiving love, the predominantly spiritual Sikh religion touches with central truths of the Christian faith as well as in its strict monotheism and its belief in creation. Also in its strong ethical orientation the Sikh religion has great similarities with Christianity. For example, its emphasis on the religious significance of loyalty and truthfulness, humility, obedience, holiness, testimony and martyrdom for the faith, further its emphasis on generosity and hospitality, forgiveness and the willing to endure injustice, moreover its special emphasis on the virtues of family life such as parental loyalty and caring as well as childlike love and piety. For that reason, as Friedrich Heiler rightly writes, the Sikh religion could become a "guide to Christ" for Sundar Singh,[6] but ultimately the Sikh religion couldn't satisfy him spiritu-

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6 Cf. F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 19.

ally because of its eclectic character and its oscillation between theism and pantheism, personalism and impersonalism, forgiveness and self-redemtion.

1.2 Sundar Singh's conversion to Christianity

With that we have returned to the biography of Sundar Singh. His mother didn't want him to be superficial and secular like his brothers, but that he should love religion and one day he should become a holy Sâdhu. This admonition strengthened the Sannyâsi, who advised his mother on educational matters, and aroused in Sâdhu Sundar Singh's young heart the desire for šânti, the (perfect) peace of the heart. So his mother gave the impetus to the vita religiosa of Sundar Singh. At the age of 14, his grief was correspondingly great when his mother died. With a double zeal he studied the sacred books of the religions in which he was educated, that is, above all, the Adi-Granth of the Sikh religion, the Hindu Vedas, especially the Upanishads, and also the Koran. In addition, he practiced in hours of deep meditation and under the guidance of a Hindu sannyāsi in the psycho-technique of yoga. But even so, he could not find the peace of his heart, which he was looking for with all his might. It had to be given to him from the outside and unavailably.

In the Christian mission school of his hometown, which was founded by an American Presbyterian, he got to know the New Testament. But he initially rejected the Christian faith totally and in his anti-Christian fanaticism he tore even parts of the Bible and other Christian writings. He himself became violent against Christian missionaries and also incited violence against them. His blind hatred of Christianity increased to a rage on the 16th of December 1904 when he burned the Bible. This day became a painful memory of his life like a thorn in the flesh of his conscience. Two days later, Sundar Singh wanted to end his desperate search for peace and quietness for his heart by suicide – at the age of 16 years. Before that, however, he prayed earnestly to God, to give him the peace he desired for his heart. A few minutes before the suicide he had planned, however, the compassionate face of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth appeared to him in a cloud of light. He spoke to him in his native language Hindustani: "Why are you persecuting me? Remember, I gave my life on the cross for you." At the same time, Christ permeated him like a divine stream and satisfied him with a heavenly, wonderful peace that left the Sâdhu never again. This epiphany of the living Christ has become for Sundar Singh the decisive turning point in his life. It brought him šânti, the perfect peace of the heart, the "peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4: 7). The immediate effect of this apparition, decisively understood by Sundar Singh as a private self-revelation of Christ, was his conversion to the Christian faith. According to the Sâdhu, the core of his conversion experience was his self-experience as a sinner and his immediate experience of Christ as his Redeemer. In other words: the experience of his judgment and the experience of the gracious forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ. His conversion was followed by his vocation to proclaim the Gospel. However, for Sundar Singh, this vocation or mission immediately involved the most severe discrimination and persecution by his family, his former friends, and his entire home environment. After his rift with his father's Sikh community, he was treated by his relatives as an outcast and fled to the Christians of Rupar, where he collapsed because his relatives had added a deadly poison

to his last meal. But he miraculously survived this assassination and was baptized on September 3, 1905 in St. Thomas Church to Simla according to the rite of the Anglican Church. 33 days after his baptism, he put on the saffron-colored sacred Indian ascetic robe and made the vow of a lifelong Christian Sâdhu, that is, proclaiming the gospel as a Christian Sâdhu.

1.3 The mission of the Sâdhu

So, the seventeen-year-old Sundar Singh began his missionary trip, barefoot, without any protection, without any property except for a blanket that he turbaned around his head, and a New Testament in his native language.

> "He did not beg for anything; Alms, which he received from friendly people, were his food; when they refused, roots and leaves had to serve to satisfy his hunger. When kind people took him to their house, he gratefully enjoyed their hospitality; when he could not find a shelter, he spent the night in dirty caravanserai or even in caves or lower trees. His Hindu compatriots mostly granted him shelter and food; but he met with fierce resistance from the Mohammedans as soon as he revealed himself as a Christian Sâdhu. Sometimes he was chased out of the house in vilification and had to seek a refuge in the jungle, starving and freezing. But Sundar Singh also encountered strong distrust among Christian missionaries; many saw in the Sâdhu's life a Hindu ideal of piety which made it impossible to christianize it, and therefore made harsh criticisms of his missionary method. With special preference, Sundar Singh went to places of pilgrimage, where Sâdhus and Sannyasin gathered in great numbers, and preached the gospel to them. He also went to the women, who were denied access to the public, to preach Christ to them".[7] (Heiler, S. 40).

At first, the Sâdhu proclaimed the gospel in his homeland, then he moved through the Punchab to Afghanistan and Kashmir, and from there to countries where the Christian mission was barely established. From there he returned to near Simla at the foot of the Himalayas. There he temporarily joined forces with an American missionary named Stokes, who had moved to India to preach the Gospel as a Franciscan disciple. The Sâdhu became a member of this Franciscan fraternity, but worked in affiliation with the Anglican Church Missionary Society. Sundar Singh remained a member of the Anglican Church to which he belonged by baptism, but he voluntarily returned the teaching permission given to him by the Primate of the Church of England in India in order not to be bound by the limits of ecclesiastical ministry; so he evangelized without priestly office and commission of a Christian church, because he regarded the whole world as his mission area. His missionary hikes between 1907 and 1918 took him all over northern India, the western and eastern Himalayas, Nepal, and even Tibet. The two latter countries had remained largely untapped by Christian mission until then. The mission of the Sâdhu, who was persecuted, imprisoned and subjected to painful physical torture and discipline for his preaching for the sake of the Gospel, were correspondingly difficult there. From 1912 his reputation spread throughout India. The enthusiastic booklet of his admirer Zahir, published in Hindustani in 1916 and in English in 1917, made him famous among Hindus and Christians.[8] Wherever he came, Christians and non-Christians gathered in masses. In 1918 he also came to South India and Ceylon. He wanted to awaken a new mis-

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7 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 40 (the translation into English comes from the author).

8 Cf. F. Heiler, Apostel oder Betrüger? Dokumente zum Sâdhustreit (as note 2), p. 146.

sionary spirit among the South Indian Thomas Christians. Afterwards he missionized in Burma (now Myanmar), Indonesia, Singapore, Japan and China. What he noticed in China and Japan was the fact that the lack of caste differences made the conversion to Christianity much easier than in India. In both countries the Christians were deeply impressed by him. After another mission trip to Little Tibet, he traveled in 1920 for the first time to Europe (England, Scotland), USA, Hawaii and Australia. After a recreational and missionary stay in Punschab, Bengal and Tibet at the foot of the Himalayas, he set out in 1922 for the second and last time on a mission trip to Europe, but he previously visited the Holy Land. From there he came via Cairo to Marseille and from there to the French-speaking (Lausanne, Geneva and Neuchatel) and German-speaking Switzerland. Only a short time he stayed in Germany, where he visited Halle, Leipzig, Wittenberg, Berlin, Hamburg and Kiel, and traveled from there to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and England. Although Sundar Singh's sermons left "indelible memories in thousands of European Christian hearts"[9], and a Sâdhu cult was practiced in England and America, and the Sâdhu was worshiped very often as a saint, he was gutted about the decadence of the Occidental Christianity. This is why his preaching of the gospel in Europe, the longer the more, assumed the character of a prophetic penitential sermon. He had already realized then that most people in the West are addicted to pleasure and enjoyment, or to the pursuit of power and dominion, "while the people in the East seek truth and salvation and receive the gospel with joy"[10]. In particular, the Sâdhu felt attracted to Tibet. On his last hike there he disappeared in 1929. On this background, the following passage from a speech of the Sâdhus in Switzerland seems almost like a prophecy:

> "I feel no fear at the thought of having to die one day in Tibet. When this day comes, I will gladly receive him. ... I return there every year, and perhaps you will find out in the next year that I have died there. Then do not think he is dead, but say he has come to heaven and to life, he is with Christ in the life of perfection"[11].

2. Basic features of the Spirituality of Sâdhu Sundar Singh

2.1 The spiritual life practice of Sâdhu

2.1.1 The central meaning of prayer

Personal prayer is the key to the understanding of the mystery of the unique personality of Sâdhu Sundar Singh. According to his own testimony and to the testimonies of his contemporaries, he draws from his prayer life the great spiritual power appearing in his missionary activity as well as in all his action and behavior. It is his personal prayer of which flows out his unbelievable strong and heartfelt love of Christ, his devoted sacrifice and his apostolic zeal. He says that prayer is like the breath of our spiritual life and the food for our soul; and he says he got everything he found by prayer alone. Because according to him prayer is the only key to the reality of God or the kingdom of God. But what does it mean

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9 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 69 (the translation into English comes from the author).
10 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 74 (the translation into English comes from the author).
11 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 74 (the translation into English comes from the author).

to pray, in the understanding of the Sâdhu? The true prayer is the complete surrender of the human heart and thus of one's own will to God. Therefore, the childlike request for certain gifts can only be a preparation for the true prayer, in which man should no longer ask God for gifts, but only for God himself, according to the instructions of Augustine in his Sermon 332: "Do not ask anything from God except God Himself." The purpose of prayer, then, cannot be the fulfillment of wishes related to particular gifts, but, as the Sâdhu likes to say, sitting at the master's feet,[12] that is to say, the union with him in love. The effects of this true prayer, however, are primarily the peace of the heart, as well as strength and joy.

2.1.2 The Sâdhu as the "Charismatic of Ecstasy"[13]

The prayerful life of the Sâdhu, which begins with meditation and progresses to wordless, contemplative prayer, often ends in genuine ecstasies, that's why Friedrich Heiler called him a "charismatic of ecstasy". These are states of consciousness in which the sensory perception and with it the space- and time-consciousness are temporarily interrupted or eliminated. In his ecstasies, the Sâdhu beheld states in the transcendent world, held inner dialogues with Christ, listened to the divine afflatus of the Holy Spirit, and spoke with the angels and saints of the heavens. These ecstasies left a deep, incomprehensible peace in his soul, even in the greatest physical suffering of torture and ill-treatment. This miracle of an incredibly deep peace of mind/heart is effected by the indwelling of God into the soul of man and thus has a supernatural origin. Thus, even in the midst of the greatest physical privations, the Sâdhu already lived in a heavenly, inner peace on earth. In the discipleship of the crucified Christ, he understood the physical and mental suffering to which he was exposed, as the ideal way to communion with God.

2.1.3 The importance of charity as a ministry to the salvation of the people

But even the vita activa, that is active charity, was quite not neglected in the life of the Sâdhu. His missionary life was entirely dedicated to the service of the salvation of his sisters and brothers. Prayer and work for the sake of the others are the two lungs of the Christian life according to the Sâdhu. A Christian must live in the world, but inwardly he should not live by the world, but only by Jesus Christ.

2.2 The spiritual theology of the Sâdhu

2.2.1 His experience-oriented theology and the personal salvation experience as it's criterion of truth

The Sâdhu has not developed a systematic theology, but he represents a kind of experience-oriented theology. For this non-rational and intellectual theology, the believer's personal experience of salvation is the decisive criterion of religious truth: What gives him the

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[12] Cf. Sadhu Sundar Singh, At the Master's Feet, Translated from the Urdu by Rev. Arthur and Mrs. Parker, New York/Chicago/London/Edinburgh 1922.

[13] F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 91 (the translation into English comes from the author).

blissful peace of the heart is also objectively true. Thus, for the Sâdhu, the blessed peace of his heart given to him by his personal encounter with Jesus Christ in his conversion experience and in daily prayer, is an existential proof of the truth of divine revelation in Jesus Christ. Thus, the Sâdhu represents the conviction that the Christian life of faith is based on the personal heart experience.

2.2.2 The Sâdhu's understanding of God, Christ, and the Holy Trinity

According to the Sâdhu God is essentially love and kindness and pure mercy. The sinner or sin itself causes the judgment and hell, while God does not punish and damn anyone. This conviction also corresponds to the karma idea of Hinduism insofar as the moral quality of one's own deed determines the fate of man. For love, God created this world as the visible image of himself and created man as a mirror of the visible and the invisible creation. God can only be seen in the living Christ; the hidden God becomes visible and available only in the incarnate Son of God. According to the religious historian Friedrich Heiler, the Hindu Avathāra faith and the assumption of the guru's divinity in the Sikh religion could have been a religious preparation for the Sâdhus decided belief in the incarnation.[14] The Sâdhu has the conviction that the deity of Christ only is visible and available in prayer. In addition, the Christian Trinity is regarded by the Sâdhu as an economy of salvation: The Son is seen as the revelation of the Divine Father, while the Holy Spirit is seen as the activity of God in the individual soul of man.

2.2.3 The concept of salvation and redemption of the Sâdhu

According to the Sâdhu the salvation of man, that is, his redemption from the power of sin, is given to him as a pure gift (sola gratia), that is, only by the sanctifying grace of Christ. This grace leads to the similarity of man with God in Jesus Christ, which, however, is not a deification of man, that is, no essential unity of God and man. Although numerous miracles are attributed to the ministry of the Sâdhu, he himself warned of false miracles and miracles as such; because, according to the Sâdhu, "miracles do not happen to satisfy our curiosity, but to save our souls"[15]. It's just about doing God's will. When he realized that his miracles of salvation favored people's superstition and distracted their attention from the gospel of Christ, the Sâdhu even refused to do further healing. In summary, it may be stated that the Sâdhu has represented the happy medium between superstitious wonder and rationalistic aversion to miracles.[16]

2.2.4 Visions of heaven and hell and the Sâdhu's understanding of the Bible, the Christian churches and the non-Christian religions

In his numerous ecstasies, the Sâdhu is said to have had visions of the transcendence world. Basically, he distinguishes between three different heavens: Firstly, the heaven on earth,

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14 See F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 135.

15 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 168 (the translation into English comes from the author).

16 Cf. F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 171.

which is the presence of Christ in the heart of the believer; secondly, the heaven of paradise, in which the souls enjoy the presence of Christ, without being able to look at him with their spiritual eyes; and the third and highest heaven, which is the place of the perfect vision of Jesus Christ and the blessed communion with all the elected and angels. But even in this heaven of the eternal home of the blessed, the divine Father remains invisible. As the hell he understands a long purgatory, which is not eternal. Because he shares the eschatological doctrine of the apocatastasis, that is, the salvation of all, considered by the Catholic and Protestant Magisterium as not orthodox, so that in the end, according to his conviction, no one ever gets lost. Heaven and hell are two opposing states in the spiritual world, which have their origin in the human heart. According to the Sâdhu, the Bible is the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, whose spiritual meaning can only be adequately understood by a spiritual person who lives deeply in communion with Christ. His mystical-pneumatic understanding of the Bible favors the most spiritual of the Gospels, the Gospel of John. For its immanence statements for the relationship between Christ and the believers ("You in me and I in you") he has a special preference. As the church the Sâdhu understands the totality of the souls belonging to Christ. So he tends to mean the heavenly rather than the earthly church, whose institutional form is less important to him, even though he has formally been and remained a member of the Anglican Church in India. As such a member he was baptized and, as often as possible, he participated in the Lord's Supper. He believed in a figurative-symbolic, Calvinist conception of the Eucharist and refused the conception of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Sâdhu was deeply convinced of the inner unity of all Christians. He therefore established contact with all Christian denominations and has proclaimed the gospel in almost all Christian churches. Because for him Christianity meant at first and foremost Christ himself and the heart-fellowship with Christ, that is, according to the Sâdhu, the Christianity was not a particular Christian church, he was able to work unifying among the various Christian denominations. He did not believe in the continuation of the divine revelation in the Church, and therefore not in the apostolic succession of the bishops, because for him the personal experience of salvation was the only religious criterion of truth. Therefore, the Protestant and the Hinduistic individualism of salvation could reciprocally reinforce each other in the personality of the Sâdhu, as Friedrich Heiler rightly points out.[17] (p. 198). The Sâdhu had a very broad and open-minded understanding of the importance of the non-Christian religions in God's plan of salvation. He assumes that the living Christ reveals himself to every human being, even the non-Christian; and he assumes that the divine Logos is universally present and effective and not limited to the historical Jesus. Accordingly, he shares the early Christian conviction of the universality of the divine will to salvation. He often labeled Western Christians ironic as the "so-called Christians" and non-Christians as the "so-called-Gentiles" because he was convinced of the sanctity of many non-Christians and the unholyness of many formal Christians. For the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism the Sâdhu has the following determination:

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17 Cf. F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 198.

"The Vedas reveal to us the need for redemption from sin, but where is the Redeemer? The Prajapati, of whom the Vedas speak, is Christ, who gave his life as a ransom for the sinners"[18].

And, to the astonishment of his Hindu listeners, he adds:

"I believe in the Vedas more than you, because I believe in the one revealed by the Vedas and that is Jesus Christ"[19].

According to the Sâdhu, the Hindu scriptures are a revealed reference to the ultimate revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Sâdhu Sundar Singh is thus deeply convinced of the universal revelation of God in the history of mankind and also of the unique, perfect revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

3 On the importance of Sâdhu Sundar Singh for Christianity in India and Europe

3.1 On the importance of Sâdhu Sundar Singh for Christianity in India

In the current Wikipedia article on Sâdhu Sundar Singh it is true:

"Sâdhu Sundar Singh is the first modern Indian theologian who developed his proclamation entirely within the Indian culture. It also meant that he renounced Western philosophy and used his own Indian traditions. He just reached ordinary people. The objection from Hindu circles, according to which he would proclaim a foreign religion, he countered with Indian argumentation mode."[20]

And then this article continues:

"For more than 70 years after his disappearance, Sâdhu Sundar Singh remains one of the most influential Indian Christians of the twentieth century, demonstrating with his life that Christianity is not a purely Western religion that is incompatible with Indian culture."[21]

In fact, Sâdhu Sundar Singh has made a great contribution to the inculturation of Christianity in India. Because as a Sâdhu he was able to give the Indians an understanding of the pure gospel. This is undoubtedly the outstanding importance of his personality and preaching for the Christian mission in India.

But not only the exterior lifestyle of the Sâdhu can convince the Indians. Also, they were strongly attracted by the form and content of his evangelical preaching. In terms of form, it was his simple language and, above all, his numerous parable speeches, which he has illustrated with daily life experiences, that made his Christian message easy to understand by the Indians. But the power of persuasion that applies to the form of his preaching also applies to the content of his message. Because he talks about the mâyâ, that is, the illusory appearance of the things of the world; but also about karma, that is the dominating moral law, according to which every deed results for its actor in a corresponding state. Like all Indi-

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18 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 204 (the translation into English comes from the author).

19 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 204 (the translation into English comes from the author).

20 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundar_Singh#Theologie (05.07.2020). The translation into English comes from the author.

21 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundar_Singh#Bedeutung (05.07.2020). The translation into English comes from the author.

an sages, he admonishes the Indians to do samādhi, that is to say, quiet, solitary meditation, which is the precondition that enables the heart of man to know the divine truth. Above all, he is concerned about šânti, that is, the peace of the soul or the heart. India's religious literature deals extensively with this search for peace. And the Sâdhu announces bhakti, that is, the love of God, which directs man to the eternal. He also preaches moksa, that is, blessed salvation in which man finds peace in time and eternity. Like the Buddha, he praises amṛta-dhâtu, that is, the "place where there is no more death." Further, he considers antaryam, that is, the "inner leader," that is, "the God who takes up his residence in the innermost of the" (human) "heart (antarhrdaye)"[22]. He praises "Bhagavan, that is, the exalted [...] god of salvation, who takes up his residence in the soul of the pious people"[23]. Finally, he proclaims the mysterious avatāra, that is, the "descent," that is, the incarnation of the Redeemer God, who descends into an inconspicuous earthly shape to save the human beings from evil. In other words, the Indian wisdom gets a Christian interpretation through the Sâdhu. In doing so, the Sâdhu corrects those forms of Indian wisdom that assume the possibility and necessity of self-redemption. He insists on humans' need for an external salvation, which is gracefully given to them through divine love. Therefore, he resolutely rejects all forms of ascetic suicide. His salvation-centered spirituality opposes the metaphysical speculation, which is deeply familiar to the Hindu Indian spiritual world, as irrelevant to man's salvation. In this regard, the Sâdhu more closely follows the teachings of the Buddha. For him, religion is only a matter of the heart and not of the head. Because of his biblical Christianity, the Sâdhu also overcomes the pantheism of the religion of his homeland. He also strongly criticizes the Indian caste system on the grounds that it violates the equal dignity of all people. In his protest against the rigid social order of his homeland, however, he had not been very successful. Because even the Indian Christianity largely adheres to the old caste differences, although the pitiful fate of the discriminated "Dalits", that is, the "untouchables" or ritually impure, who do not belong to any of the four classic castes, but to the so-called sub-caste, is finding more and more social and theological attention in today's Indian Christianity.

In summary, however, we can say that Sâdhu Sundar Singh represents exemplarily India's ideal of a disciple of Christ.

3.2 About the importance of Sâdhu Sundar Singh
for Christianity in Europe

As the historian of religion Friedrich Heiler rightly writes, the Sâdhu is like an exhortation to the conscience of European Christianity to "be completely serious about the Christian truth of faith"[24]. He means that the life and work of the Sâdhu should be understood by European Christianity as a call to intensify its prayer life. A Christian without prayer is a corpse, as the sādhu formulates succinctly, that is, a Christian without prayer is completely ineffective.[25]

22 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 215 (the translation into English comes from the author).
23 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 215 (the translation into English comes from the author).
24 F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 232 (the translation into English comes from the author).
25 See F. Heiler, Sadhu Sundar Singh (as note 1), p. 234.

Because, according to Friedrich Heiler, Western Christianity has largely lost the sense for transcendence, Western Christianity urgently needs Sâdhu Sundar Singhs impressive witness to the living presence of Jesus Christ, especially to his deity. The Sâdhu shows how the Western Christians should already live on earth, so to speak, like in heaven, namely they should live in God and from God. Furthermore, the Sâdhu shows that Christian theology can come into contact with the divine mystery in Jesus Christ only at the master's feet, that is to say, through prayer. Thus, the Sâdhu shows that the best Christian theology is the theology of the saints. He also points out that Christianity and the church as an institution are not the same thing; and he points out that, strictly speaking, a person may only be called a Christian if Christ lives in the heart of that person. In addition, the Sâdhu also has an eminent importance for Christian ecumenism because he points out that the unity of Christianity only can be achieved if the believers of all Christian denominations get into an inner communion with Christ.

Therefore Sâdhu Sundar Singh is indeed a true disciple of Christ and apostle of and for the Indian East, but he is also an apostle for the former Christian West due to his dual message for Indian and European Christianity.

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Cārvāka Darśana in View of Environmental Harmony

Abstract: Cārvāka Darśana is prevalently considered to be the materialistic school of Indian philosophy that sans all ethics and morals and has out rightly been discarded and criticized by many. The allegations that have been put on Cārvāka Darśana are known to one and all. The current article gives a background of the Cārvāka philosophy as commonly understood and then presents an argument that may assist the contemporary scholars and philosophers to reinterpret this age old philosophy for the benefit of all lives. The current article has been written with an unbiased point of view and endeavors that the age old philosophy of Cārvāka will be seen in a new light that will be beneficial in attaining environmental harmony.

Keywords: Cārvāka Darśana, Cārvāka Philosophy, Cārvāka Ethics, Contemporary Cārvāka, Environment and Cārvāka.

The origin of the word 'Cārvāka' remains ambiguous. According to a few scholars, the word 'Cārvāka' comes from the Saṃskṛt word 'Carva' which literally means 'to chew'. It is thus understood that the Cārvākas are those who chew on the concept of 'Self' (Carvatyātmānaṃ Cārvākaḥ). According to another school of thought, the word Cārvāka has been derived from the combination of the Saṃskṛt words Cāru+Vāka. Thus, a Cārvāka is one who is sweet spoken and goes on to con others with the dint of his polite and sweet manner of communication. Yet another viewpoint states that Cārvāka was the disciple of Bṛhaspati (the teacher or Guru of the Devas), who was the founder of this school and who propagated materialism within the Asuras to manipulate them. However, all of these remain mere speculations and have no concrete grounds.

Cārvāka also came to be known as Lokāyata, Dehātmavādi, Nāstikakamata, Bārhaspatyamata, Ucchedavāda, etc. Cārvāka is said to be 'The Philosophy of the World'. However, nothing much can be said with certitude about this school as most of the literature related to Cārvāka Darśana has dwindled away. It is agreed that the Bārhaspatyasūtras were lost during the 6th Century BCE and the available teachings of the system were pulled out from secondary sources of the records of various Śāstras, Sūtras and pieces of literature related to Jainism along with dialogues of Gautama, The Buddha. As a result, authors who were born post twelfth century had no access to the original sources of the Cārvāka Darśana.[1] It is consequently advised that the philosophy of Cārvāka as promulgated inthe present times must not be accepted on face value instead one must contemplate upon it by getting into the intricacies.

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[1] Mittal Kewal Kumar, '*Materilism in Indian Thought*', Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1974, pp. 23-36.

It must be pointed out that in the absence of primary sources, Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha, remained unsuccessful in quoting even a single reference to any of the original Cārvāka texts. It is also vital to emphasize that many verses that have been attributed to the Cārvāka have purposefully distorted. The name Cārvāka or Lokāyata was non-existent initially and doesn't appear in the Vedic literature. Later, Śāntarakṣita and Ādi Śaṅkarācarya began referring to this school as 'Lokāyata'.

Cārvāka Darśana professes matter to be the only reality. This school accepts the existence of only four elements, namely: Pṛthvī, Jalá, Agní And Vāyu. For Cārvāka, perception (Pratyakṣa) is the only valid source of knowledge (Pramāna). It also rejects inference (Anumāna) as a valid source of knowledge. However, it must be understood that Cārvāka holds no aversion to reason and logic. When Cārvāka raises objection against inference, it is in order to underscore that 'not certainty but practical probability can be established in the case of a reasoned conclusion'. This view towards inference is quite palpable and logical. When Cārvāka rejects testimony as a Prammāna, it is again not in the absolute sense. Cārvāka rejects only that authority which is unverifiable; in particular it rejects the Vedas. Cārvāka in no way rejects testimony that is useful in carrying forward a normal life. However, Cārvāka states that testimony by itself cannot be an independent source of knowledge.[2]

Cārvāka not merely considers material to be the the highest truth, it also goes to the magnitude of explaining metaphysical concepts like consciousness in terms of material, which comes into existence when the four elements come together in a certain proportion and ends with the end of the material body. Hence, Cārvāka has no place for things and concepts that cannot be perceived and out rightly rejects notions of soul, Īśvara, rebirth, and Karma. Since Cārvāka believes in no other life after death, the philosophy promotes one to lead a life of enjoyment.

In case of Kauṭiliya Arthaśāstra, 'Lokāyata is certainly not a school of materialism but is a school of logic[3]'. According to Kauṭiliya, there are three kinds of vidyā:

1. **Trayī-vidyā**   : Ṛk, Sāma, and Yajuḥ (Theology)
2. **Vārtā-vidyā**   : commerce, agriculture and animal husbandry (Economics)
3. **Ānvīkṣiki-vidyā** : Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Lokāyata (Logic and Reason)

Here Kangle is of the view that the word 'Ānvīkṣikividyā' can be interpreted as Tarkvidyā (knowledge based upon logic). The view that this school was developed amongst the learned Brahmins who ventured to think against the current can also be proved with the help of commentaries (Vartikā and Varnikā) like Bhāgurī in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya[4]. Therefore, the word 'Carvi' also meant intelligence[5].[6]

Cārvāka ethics are often referred to as rudimentary and unsophisticated. For Cārvāka, the there exists no other life than the one we live. Hence, once a being is reduced to

2 Mittal Kewal Kumar, '*Materilism in Indian Thought*', Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1974, pp. 44-45.

3 Kangle R.P. '*The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*', MLBD, Delhi,2014, pp. 4-6

4 Kangle R.P. '*The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*', MLBD, Delhi,2014, pp. 4-6.

5 Pāṇini '*Aśtādhyāyi*' Vāsu Śrīśa (Ed), Vol.i, MLBD, Delhi, 1980, p. 136.

6 Mittal Kewal Krishan, '*Materilism in Indian Thought*', Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1974, pp. 22-31.

ashes there is no chance of his return to this world. Cārvāka thus advocates that one must live a life of joy and happiness. It is suggested that out of the four Puruṣārtha, the Cārvāka Darśana completely rejects Dharmā and Mokṣa. Kāma alone is advocated by the Cārvāka and Arthā is seen merely as a means to realise Kāma.

Interpretation of Cārvāka Darśana for Environmental Harmony: It is time to comprehend Cārvāka Darśana from an impartial, unprejudiced and disinterested point of view instead of merely being conditioned by prevailing misconceptions that surround the philosophy. It is time that we make use of our judgements and look at this philosophy with a desire to promote the well-being of the cosmos.

Cārvāka and The Puruṣārtha: Fact or Myth: According to the eminent scholar of Cārvāka philosophy- Rama Krishna Bhattacharya 'All materialists are nothing but sensualists'[7] is an erroneous belief. Therefore, it is extremely doubtful if the Cārvāka Darśana accepted the two Puruṣārtha-Artha and Kāma. The concept of Puruṣārtha itself entrenched in the Vedic tradition. Therefore, to consider the fact that Cārvāka accepts these two Puruṣārtha that have Vedic roots seems unsavory as Cārvāka out rightly rejects the Vedas. Even if one settles that Cārvāka accepts the two Puruṣārtha- Artha and Kama which are essentially Vedic, it still cannot be concluded that the Cārvāka Darśana preaches selfishness, immorality and other indulgences as it has popularly been believed.

Cārvāka's Materialism for Environmental Harmony: It must also be noted that though Cārvāka philosophy talks of materialism yet in no way can it be concluded that it refutes environmental protection and preservation. Acceptance of materialism itself is acceptance of all that is material and perceptible. Therefore, even the most materialistic society will preserve anything that is going to benefit them at a material level. Therefore, even if the prejudice sticken scholars want to believe that Cārvāka philosophy sans complete ethics, they will still have to agree that for the sake of material benefit this philosophy cannot refute protection of the environment.

It is likely that Cārvāka philosophy has been portrayed in a negative light with a definate resolve. Though, there is no denying that it is a philosophy that considers material to be the highest reality. It is also important to take into account that all original sources of Cārvāka were lost. Therefore, no primary texts have been available to conclude that Cārvāka had no seeds of sensitivity towards the environment and all other sentient beings. To downrightly disprove of the concept of kindness and sensitivity in case of the Cārvāka system merely because the philosophy is a materialistic one, highlights a very narrow and illogical view. Who says that a materialistic being cannot be sensitive and kind or lacks ethics and morals?

Cārvāka's Pleasure: The Final End: No doubt, for Cārvāka 'happiness' is the epitome. However, 'happiness' has been misconstrued and has been reflected in a negative light. Since Cārvāka considers 'happiness' as an ideal, it can be inferred that he talks of happiness that predominates throughout one's life and not happiness that is ephemeral and fleeting. Though, every living being desires happiness yet it isn't easy to attain the superlative hap-

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7 Bhattacharya Ramakrishna, '*Studies on the Cārvāka*', Anthem Press, usa and London, 2011, p. 10

piness because happiness comes along with pain. Thus, one needs to make every effort in order to attain happiness. Since, wealth is needed to be comfortable and happy; one must strive hard to earn wealth. Likewise, a person must strive hard and make efforts in order to attain the balance of environmental wealth which is beneficial for an individual, society and the world. Therefore, Cārvāka Darśana makes 'happiness' as the ideal which can be attained by an individual through the material and this material also includes environment. Further, Cārvāka propounds upon of ending ruthless sacrifices in the name of religion, obscene sexual practices in the name of performance of rites, harmony in the four elements that give rise to everything. Nowhere does Cārvāka advocates stealing, murder, rapes and other crimes that lead to disharmony of any kind.

Cārvāka professes that everything in the universe happens due to Svabhāva (nature) and coming together of the four Bhūtas (elements). Along these lines, it cannot be said that the Cārvāka School denies causation. Though Cārvāka may be of the view that there is no overall purpose in nature yet to interpret this as denial of personal purpose is again fallacious. In this manner, Cārvāka accepts Svabhāvāda and yet it acknowledges the purpose of a being, which is 'happiness'. 'Pleasure, Happiness, Joy' mean different things to different people. Therefore, Cārvāka's philosophy is quite reasonable if it is seen in the right light and without any biased conditionings and prejudices. Cārvāka philosophy professes that no living creature is immortal and all are subject to death. Thus, all must live a life of happiness and pleasure.

Cārvāka's Refutation of Karmakānda in View Universal Harmony: To conclude that Cārvāka Darśana disregards 'Dharma' is being extremely short sighted. No doubt Cārvāka Darśana refutes 'Dharma' if one understands the word 'Dharma' as 'Vedic Karmakānda'. However, to conclude that Cārvāka refutes 'Dharma' which means 'The Cosmic Order' seems to be fallacious. Even if it is accepted that Cārvāka Darśana accepts this world as the only reality yet it cannot be concluded that it refutes 'Dharma' as the cosmic order. To say that Cārvāka Darśana refuses to accept Dharma as the cosmic order is to say that it refutes the nature of the material reality. This thought seems to be pasted upon the Cārvāka Darśana by those who hold prejudices against it.

Cārvākas Darśana certainly shows signs of refutation against cruel rituals and norms. This refutation cannot merely be in order to fight against the prevailing practices of that time. If the Cārvākas had to merely refute the practices in existence, there were plenty of other practices to be refuted. Refutation of animal sacrifice clearly shows signs of sensitivity towards other beings. Even if one says that the refutation arose as a current against the existing practices, the refutation was indeed logical and may be the need of the hour at that time. This can be proved by the following statement:

> "If animal slain as an offering to the dead will itself go to heaven, why does the one who sacrifice not straightway offer his father? Hence for kindness to the mass of living beings, we must fly for refuge in the doctrine of Carvaka".[8]

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8 Bhattacharya Ramkrishna,'*Cārvāka Fragments: A New Collection Vol.30*', Journal of Indian Philosophy, Netherlands, 2002, pp. 587-640. (Cārvāka Sahasthi V-57.1)

Cārvāka's words also project the way animals and women were treated and were sexually abused in the name of religion that was being misinterpreted by a few:

"The fraudulent ones lay down that the penis of a horse in horse sacrifice rituals has to be taken in by a women. These cheats and frauds are hoax and gimmick-ridden to acquire things that belong to others but these dwellers of the night desire eating meat behind the veil of customs."[9]

If pleasure was the only aim of the Cārvāka Darśana then it would not have refuted the above said practice. The above statement also proves that 'eating meat' was looked down upon by the Cārvākas. They further call those who indulge in mindless rituals, hurting animals and women, propagate custom oriented sex and meat eating as 'Cheats, Fraudulent, Gimmick Ridden and Hoax'.

Conclusion: On the basis of the above said, one can conclude that it is not necessary that a society which is materialistic is not kind. Undoubtedly, Cārvākas refuses to accept austerity. This however should not lead us to assume that this school promotes carnal pleasure as the final goal and sans ethics, morals and basic humanity towards other material entities. This is an extremely fallacious estimation of the Cārvāka philosophy. The position of Cārvāka can be measured up with that of the Greek philosopher- Epicurus. Though Epicurus led an enormously pious and austere life yet his name was maligned and it is propagated that he believed in 'Eat, Drink and Make Merry'. Ajīta Keśakaṃbalī, a Cārvāka who lived during the times of Gautama Buddha was an the epitome of simplicity. Thus, it can be said without a doubt that even the most materialistic philosophy of India shows evident signs of refutation against unnecessary sacrificial rituals and killing of a being, which is a part of the entire ecological system. This throws light on the fact that all philosophies of Indian origin despite being materialistic were concerned about fellow beings. Whether this concern was genuine or a mere attack on Vedic tradition is a question to be contemplated and researched upon.

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9 Shastri Ranjan Dakshina, '*Charvaka Philosophy*', Rabindra Bharti University, Kolkata,1967, pp. 35.44.

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Drawing Wisdom from a Pandemic:
An Essay Implications of Covid-19 for Nature, God, Death, Predestination, Faith

Abstract: This essay explores the humanistic dimensions of the unparalleled world-wide pandemic caused by Covid-19. Using both western and eastern sources, it seeks to draw wisdom from this tragedy – but also apply wisdom to it. Reflecting on the historical moment ensconcing this pandemic, and the fundamental metaphysical implications of Covid-19, this essay has three parts: (1) Precipice of History-Nature: This Historical Moment surrounding Covid-19; (2) Implications of a Pandemic for the *nature* of Nature and God; (3) Implications of a Pandemic for Death, Predestination, Higher Faith – and likely Results. Viewing this moment as portentous in its anticipation of a new age, this essay uses the notion of a temporized precipice, to situate this pandemic historically. Drawing from western (Heidegger, Russell, Augustine, Catherine of Sienna, Epictetus, Plato, and Plotinus), and Indian (Gandhi, Vivekananda, and the *Bhagavadgītā*) sources, this essay offers both idealistic and realistic views of the likely results of Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, history, nature, precipice, technology, God, death, predestination, faith.

Until recently we saw an unflinching sense of invincibility – an inordinate faith in human agency that eschewed all potential limits – whether predestination, contingency, or divine dispensation. Reaching its natural apotheosis by early 2020, this sense of invincibility had all but forgotten Stoic philosophers like Epictetus, whose distinguishing feature lies in tempering free-will with predestination. Until recently we celebrated this artificial unassailability, especially among the youth – accepting it as a hallmark of modernity, even when it belied hidden sorrows underlying the painted laughter of the prosperous nations of the world. Part of this false confidence came from our over-reliance on technology, and part from the egoism inherent in modernity. Armed with technology, modern man felt he had conquered contingency itself – so great was his *hubris* before nature and destiny. One expression of this *hubris* lay in his penchant for planning. Unlike prior ages, modernity does not stop at merely fantasizing desires. Using technology, the desire-drenched modern mind can *actualize* its desires.[1] Part of this actualizing lies

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[1]   In this essay, I use "modern" loosely, to signify both the postmodern mindset and our contemporary worldview for which we have no name as yet. I do not use "modern" in its strict technical and historical sense.

in planning and hence controlling empirical reality, thus conquering contingency. Convinced that he had absolute jurisdiction over every aspect of life, whether external, or internal, modern man sought to plan, and hence control, every detail of life. Accustomed to actualizing his desires, through careful planning and a worldly pragmatism that has tamed even risk in the world of finance, modern man felt he had conquered contingency, destiny, and death.

Then Covid-19 struck, spurring the greatest crisis the world, as a whole, has seen in decades. In the prosperous nations, there was, at first, a tremor of delusion and denial. Given their common perception – that insurmountable natural disasters always happened elsewhere – in the poorer nations of the world – this myopia was to be expected. Lulled into complacency by the armor of necessity he has carefully crafted – through practical mechanisms that foretell, with certitude, the sequence of logical subsequents in his plans, and through mechanical mechanisms that make technology so predictable – modern man was wholly unprepared for the morass of contingency that descended with this pandemic – a veritable leap in the dark. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic has unleashed a storm of contingency upon an over-planned modernity that has fortified itself against risk by all kinds of insurance schemes.

If anything, this pandemic has demonstrated that despite science, technology and freedom of will, human life is frail enough to hang on a thread of destiny. Notwithstanding his great strides in science and technology, man cannot alter destiny or obliterate death. Moreover, the same science he relies on to rescue him from this pandemic, has repeatedly intruded into and violated nature, discovering its laws only to bend them to its own avaricious purposes. Instead of offering gratitude and veneration, modern man has reified nature into resources. To the pecuniary eye, even the heavenly bodies are profitable commodities to be mined to satiate mankind's insatiable thirst for soulless forms of matter. If anything, this pandemic reveals a twofold rebalancing – first, nature's merciless act of rebalancing, which serves as its insentient rebuke to mankind, and second, man's unexpected act of rebalancing himself, by a coerced inward turn. For, the retching soul, characteristic of modernity, has been forced to rebalance itself by turning inward. Unleashing a timorous silence that shrieked across a virus-ridden nature, as animals and birds returned from winter to an abandoned human civilization, Covid-19 has forced a social isolation that serves as a much needed retreat from the cacophony of the world.

This essay explores the humanistic dimensions of this unparalleled world-wide pandemic. Using both western and eastern sources, it seeks to draw wisdom from Covid-19 – but also apply wisdom to it. This essay therefore has three parts: (1) Precipice of History-Nature: This Historical Moment surrounding Covid-19; (2) Implications of a Pandemic for the *nature* of Nature and God; and (3) Implications of a Pandemic for Death, Predestination, Higher Faith – and likely Results.[2]

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2   In some portions (not always) of this essay, I have capitalized certain terms – like Nature, History, Technology, Death, etc. – to indicate their metaphysical and historical pre-eminence.

Precipice of History-Nature:
This Historical Moment surrounding Covid-19

This pandemic did not happen in a vacuum. Inasmuch as all biological phenomena are immersed in history, its immediate and primary cause was historical-biological (the Sars-CoV-2 virus). Provided we accept as its most probable causal origin, transmission from Wuhan's Huanan live animal market – a purely accidental zoonosis – we can rule out historical-political sources as immediate causes of this virus.

Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic is embedded in a matchless, quasi-providential historical moment. On the one hand, a portentous mood – an ominous counter-*Kairos*, as it were – and on the other, a chorus of historical events that conglomerate to define it – this moment surrounding Covid-19 is a historical precipice that serves as the cusp between two ages. It serves as well as a disruption-that-hastens mankind's halting moral progress away from moral relativism, in the direction of conscience.

The Covid-19 pandemic, one might say, expresses that supreme *precipice of all precipices*, which synthesizes the separate precipices of History and Nature. This pandemic, one might add, simply vivifies the hidden connection that has always linked History with Nature – a connection that should not surprise us, for History and Nature are related in a profound kinship. Nature ensconces History, even as it participates in it, receiving from History its deep imprints, even as Earth receives from man his imprints. History is embedded within a physical nature, which comes with its own history, or temporized lineage. Human history has defied and defiled nature through western science, which desecrates by intruding into and manipulating nature's power – heedless and profane in its ingratitude before nature's bounty. Moreover, despite basic differences, History and Nature share in at least two analogies. First, both express the combined will of God and creature. If History expresses the conjoined will of God and man, then Nature expresses that of God, man, and the relatively blind will of non-human beings – alongside the blind will of the amoral transcendental laws that govern nature. Second, History and Nature each possesses a slaughter-bench. If that of History comprises human iniquities – then that of nature reaches beyond mankind's violence to the non-human world, to include the violence inherent in natural phenomena and that of animals to one another.

This rare and rarefied precipice of History – to be distinguished from the turning of History, which swings from extreme to extreme in its sempiternal evasions of balance – is a cliff that portends dramatic historical transition from one age to the next – without human will or conscious agency. During a historical precipice, human agents – who usually serve as conscious couriers of History – become passive actors in the theater of History – even if fortified with free-will. One purpose of a historical precipice is to dredge human iniquities, by making them rise to the surface, churning the hissing cauldron of politics with unrest[3] – for the further purpose of lancing these iniquities, to redeem mankind, like lanc-

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3 I have borrowed St. Augustine's eloquent phrase, "hissing cauldron" (Book III) from his *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 55.

ing a boil to heal the flesh. Human iniquities that have percolated through the annals of prior history rise to the surface, so they can be dredged and thus sublimated – paving the way for the golden sunrise of a new, morally greater age.

In recent times, the turning of History has wrested from man, a burgeoning nationalism, to overcome the excessive internationalism of its immediate past. But belonging as it does to the precipice of History, Covid-19 has stalled nationalism, stemming it by an ominous viral internationalism. Supremely indifferent to race or ethnicity, this virus, in its pure biological essence, respects no national borders. It attacks anyone anywhere, forging thereby an ominous globalism. Yet the turning of History and its promise of resurgent nationalism continue to murmur in the background, as national leaders attack one another, and xenophobia wrings us dry of compassion towards those suffering this lethal ailment.

Likewise, the precipice of Nature expresses a cliff that portends dramatic change – if nothing else, through Nature's response to centuries of human impact – not through predictable natural phenomena, nor as an echo of human iniquities, but in sudden unexpected and unconscious acts of rebalancing. *Covid-19 expresses the acme of a slaughter-bench that is simultaneously historical and natural*.

A second way to envision this historical moment that embeds the Covid-19 pandemic, is in terms of the principle events that have led to it, and perhaps beyond it. From the rise of advanced capitalism, the environmental crisis, the crisis in truth, the role of science, and the triumph of technology – to rising nationalism amidst fading internationalism, and the rise of China, amidst the decline of America – a host of historical events have culminated to form *this* historical moment that embeds the ominous pearl of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of these, Technology stands out as a corporeal behemoth that impacts with its omnipresence, just about every aspect of life.

In the past few decades, western man has celebrated his triumph over nature through the advent of modern technology, which, as Heidegger notes, is different from older "handwork" forms:

> The instrumental definition of technology is indeed so uncannily correct that it even holds for modern technology, of which, in other respects, we maintain with some justification that it is, in contrast to the older handwork technology, something completely different and therefore new.[4]

As a near autonomous entity that appears omnipresent and omnipotent, modern technology, a Promethean Fire, is a force all its own. The spectacular success of technology and technological products has made modern man feel all the more invincible before nature and destiny. Lulled by Technology into an illusory sense of security, he has come to experience a new complacency. Drunk with utilitarian powers, he has come to believe that for every problem in life, he has a technical solution. Oblivious that there is no technical solution to our existential challenges, he had become complacent before disease and death, quite forgetting Epictetus' teaching (Passage 2) – "... but if you are

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4 M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), 5.

averse to illness or death ... you will meet misfortune."[5] Now an unrelenting virus has not only threatened human life, but also reminded man of the grim limits to his utilitarian powers, thus shaking his complacency. Shedding new light, it has revealed the historicity of modern technology as more a Promethean Fire, than mankind's achievement – a Fire, not stolen from Zeus, but bestowed by divine providence. For, the very advent and historical purpose of modern technology, now appears to have been to help us handle this pandemic.

In the past century and more, a secular nihilistic west has gradually replaced God by more accessible and immanent universals that chorus in a corporeal theophany – like History, Nature, and the Universe. Thus, Russell speaks of what amounts to a corporeal *unio mystica* (an oxymoron) – when he speaks of the human mind uniting, not with God, but with the universe – heightening this idolatry by adding that this constitutes its "highest good":

> Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions ... but rather for the sake of the questions themselves ... above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.[6]

Qua corporeal universal, Technology joins this choir of idols as the new god of modernity. In Genesis 1:3, God says, "Let there be light" and light appears. Modern man seeks to mimic this divine creative power, not spiritually, but corporeally – with Technology, his idolized handmaid. Godlike in his seeming omnipotence, modern man feels he can alter external reality at his command – using the insentient mechanical agency of Technology. Drunk with power and oblivious of the futility of his audacious mimesis of divinity, he seems unaware that technological prowess can be morally weakening; that technological thinking – which, in its pure utilitarianism, qualifies as what Vivekananda calls "excess of knowledge and power, without holiness" to characterize the modern world[7] – desiccates the human soul, by prioritizing expediency over moral principles; that, given its total dearth of wisdom amidst a stark logical structure, technological thinking is a skeletal form of contemplation; and that logic being the lowest rung in the ladder of truthfulness, technological thinking becomes no more than a faint echo of Truth. Oblivious that he cannot create sentience – modern man deludes himself with a womb envy, hand-in-hand with a Frankensteinian sense of agency that finds expression in creations like artificial intelligence and robots. From this enormous godless *hubris*, he derives a hollow, unearned, and false confidence. Forgetful that nature and destiny place natural limits to his powers, and oblivious of the moral significance of his freedom of will, which stands tall before the teeming pecuniary choices that inundate him – modern man has long felt invincible before nature.

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5   Epictetus, *The Handbook*, trans. N. P. White (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 12.

6   B. Russell, "The Value of Philosophy," in *The Problems of Philosophy* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), 249-250.

7   Vivekananda, "Vedanta and Privilege," in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol. I (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2001), 425. Here Vivekananda also warns against the raw power of technology: "Tremendous power is being acquired by the manufacture of machines and other appliances, and privilege is claimed today as it never has been claimed in the history of the world."

But now, Covid-19 has not only exposed the frailty of the modern desire-drenched economy, but also heightened our reliance on this bulwark of the pandemic economy – namely, technology. Without technology, our social isolation would have been even starker, atrophying into destructive levels of anomie. We may recognize the limitations of technology in modern communication – that the greater the advance in technological means of communication, the greater the alienation in human communication and intimacy, as evinced by the meaningless wafers of sympathy, narcissistic outpourings, and lamentations that have come to comprise loveless intimacy; that part of its alienation lies in the fact that modern communication is inherently mediated, whether through books, therapy, social media, or technology, etc. Nevertheless, the Covid-19 pandemic has made technology indispensable for human contact, especially in the prosperous nations of the world. But for technology, we would have had literally no means of contacting other persons, thus exacerbating the devastating impact of this pandemic on human togetherness. Moreover, but for technology, the economy would have collapsed on a far larger scale, disrupting supply chains and leaving us without basic necessities. Finally, but for technology, testing for, and medical care of Covid-19 patients would have been impossible. Thus, it is as if the Covid-19 pandemic has vindicated (instead of challenging) mankind's idolatrous adoration of Technology and the exalted position it already occupied among the choir of idols in this corporeal theophany, serving as its utilitarian wing.

A third way to describe this historical moment ensconcing the Covid-19 pandemic, is to see it as a disruption of mankind's moral progress that yet advances this progress. For, the years leading up to and immersing this pandemic comprise perhaps a culmination of a slow torturous recovery from loss of conscience in prior decades. Western civilization's lethal moral relativism that culminated in late twentieth-century serves perhaps as the greatest sign of this loss of conscience that we were recovering from. A sign of excessive individuality, the subjective ethics inherent in moral relativism reified morality into a commodity, to be selected by personal preference. Notwithstanding his invincibility before nature and destiny, modern man denied free-will – the only source of true strength and moral action – by a host of ingenious means that ranged from the scientific spirit, which abhors inwardness, thus denying free-will – to nature-nurture theories that claim to forge man by external causes, thus denying free-will – to the penchant of modern psychology to pathologize moral lapses and iniquities, again denying free-will. Until the pandemic struck, we experienced the precipice of History through a world-wide turmoil that stood as the frontispiece of a historical dredging of our collective iniquities – forcing mankind to limp away from moral relativism in the direction of conscience. Overtly it would seem that the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted this ascent by a morass of contingency that eclipsed mankind's sense of personal agency. But covertly, it has hastened (instead of disrupting) this neophyte collective ascent, by bringing about a sort of historical surrender before nature, destiny and the will of God.

Implications of a Pandemic for the nature of Nature and God

On the face of it, the Covid-19 pandemic is a conundrum that is difficult to categorize. Assuming it was caused accidentally, it is neither moral evil, nor a form of natural evil. Even if natural

in origin and transmission, Covid-19 is not a natural calamity. Relying for its transmission on human agency, whether intentional or not, a virus differs significantly from a typhoon, tornado, or volcanic eruption. Unlike a tornado, Covid-19 is transmitted through human persons, who possess free-will, and therefore the choice whether or not to transmit this virus by disobeying or obeying necessary medical injunctions. Barring unknowing and accidental transmissions by those who do not know they are infected, and those who do, respectively, all other transmissions depend on the will and agency of the pandemic patient. Added to this, the distinction between natural and moral evil can be thin, depending on how we conceive of nature. Covid-19 therefore raises profound questions about the *nature* of nature.

Is nature merely what the natural sciences envision – an unconscious conglomeration of blind forms of matter, colliding with one another in accordance with equally blind non-moral laws? Or, is nature a hierarchy of sentience that signifies a hierarchy of degrees of consciousness? Insofar as nature is part of the larger domain of Immanence, bound by three spectral sentinels – time, space and causality – its purpose, one might say, is to host the visible portions of the Great Chain of Being – with the invisible portions lodged in the subtler realms that transcend space – but not time or causality. Together, the two realms (visible and invisible) host a temporized gradient of sentience – with man occupying the summit in the visible world. Yet, man cannot be the highest being in the entirety of this metaphysical ladder. For, as Plotinus states, man is a middle creature, lodged in between gods and the beasts, without combining the two in himself:

> But the fact is that man has the middle place between gods and beasts, and inclines now one way, now the other, and some men become like gods and others like beasts, and some, the majority, are in between. (III.2(47).8)[8]

If indeed, man occupies a middle position in the Great Chain of Being, then a plethora of gods, demi-gods and spirits – that is, supra-human beings – should be occupying the upper echelons above man, with sentient and insentient beings from the rest of nature occupying levels below man.

From this portrait of the Great Chain of Being, we might conclude that the higher one reaches, the higher one's degree of consciousness *qua* sentience, and accordingly, the subtler one's embodiment type. Insofar as body consciousness recedes with ascent, the higher one exists on this metaphysical ladder, the greater should be one's sentience, consciousness, and capacity to manifest divinity. One sign of this growing glory should be possession of free-will. Thus, it is not only sentience, consciousness, and capacity to manifest divinity that distinguish these higher from lower levels on this metaphysical ladder, but more importantly, the capacity for free-will, which expresses all three.

What does all this mean for the *nature* of nature in the context of this pandemic? Distinguishing between nature and Immanence, we might conclude that nature is part of Im-

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8 Plotinus, *Ennead III*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 69. Unlike Plotinus, Gandhi appears to combine the two extremes (animal and spirit) within man himself – "Man as animal is violent but as spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the spirit within he cannot remain violent." See Passage I-311, in T. Merton, ed., *Gandhi on Non-Violence* (New York: New Directions, 2007), 40.

manence, quite as the universe is part of nature. If the domain of Immanence, circumscribed by the metaphysical trinity of time-space-causality, hosts the Great Chain of Being in its entirety, in addition to the myriad places of a hierarchical afterlife, then nature – its tangible material expression, ruled by non-moral transcendental laws – hosts the material universe.

Likewise, we must also distinguish, on the one hand, between inner and outer nature – and on the other, between human and non-human nature. If our inner corporeal nature consists of the details of our biological life – thus qualifying as both inner and outer nature – then external nature includes the teeming life forms and insentient entities that comprise empirical reality. Moreover, inasmuch as mind rules over matter, our biological life, although part of external nature, is to some extent within our control. But human nature – understood as those freely-willed propensities we inherit from past lives through the cycles of reincarnation – is something entirely different. Unlike non-human nature, which being law-bound, is inflexible, the moral aspects of human nature are *chosen* by free-will. Thus, although both are law-bound, human and non-human nature are regulated by somewhat opposite laws. Where human nature, *qua* soul, is regulated *potentially* by a transcendental moral law, and human nature, *qua* mind, by time-space-causation[9] – non-human, external nature is ruled by time-space-causation and transcendental non-moral laws. Thus both the human mind and external nature are subject to the necessity that derives from being ruled by time-space-causation. But external nature is subject to an additional layer of necessity that derives from the transcendental laws that govern it. Notwithstanding this polarity, external nature is not to be dismissed as insentient, unconscious, and material. A host to different vibrations of being, each, a different manifestation of divinity, external nature too is alive and conscious, even if less than man. Inasmuch as some beings are more sentient and capable of pain than others, the degree of external sentience varies across nature. If the erupting volcano follows blindly the unseeing laws of nature, then the animal that howls in pain expresses self-willed sentience – with both immersed in time-space-causation. Compared to man, nature has lower degrees of sentience and higher levels of materiality. But this does not denigrate external nature to the level of blind matter. Nor does this justify modern man's propensity to reify nature to resources to be plundered. Law-bound, vibrant with life, and hosting the universe, nature is that glowing portion of Immanence, we call home. Alive and ensouled, nature too is a middle creature – lodged between God and man – serving as a conduit of God, but also as an echo-chamber of human thoughts that spur the laws that govern nature, to create natural phenomena. Finally (as already stated), insofar as nature has a longer history than man, nature comes with its own independent history. Yet, nature also falls within the theater of human history. Immersed in time-space-causation, nature transpires within human history, even as it ensconces it.

Coordinating these myriad aspects, we might conclude that Nature has three tiers – the sublime, where it is a conduit of God, the slaughter-bench, where, in its pure utilitarianism, it is akin to the slaughter-bench of History, and the middle layer, where it is an echo chamber of human thoughts and deeds. In its sublime aspect, nature provides the corpore-

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9 Vivekananda, "Nature and Man," in *Complete Works*, vol. VI, 34.

al instances that instantiate Plato's form, Beauty-in-itself. Whereas, Vivekananda's point – that "the whole process of evolution is the soul's struggle to manifest itself. It is a constant struggle against nature ... and not conformity to nature"[10] – applies especially to the lowest tier, which is a slaughter-bench, where we possess direct control of nature – but also to physical nature as a whole. For the soul wages war against the necessity bestowed by time-space-causation upon nature.

Recognizing these different levels, should fill our hearts with homage for the natural world, even as we fight nature in its lowest aspects. It should fill our hearts with a sense of fraternity towards all creatures, even as St. Francis, in his *Canticle of the Sun*, used honorific soubriquets for his fellow creatures, enlivening them from their apparent insentience – "Brother Sun," "Sister Water," "Brother Fire," "Sister Moon," "Sister Mother Earth," etc.[11]

Recognizing these different tiers of nature should also make us grateful to the world of plants, animals, birds, and fish that sustain us biologically. That they exist below man in the Great Chain of Being, should not mean they exist merely to serve and feed man. As ends in themselves, non-human living beings, each have their own intrinsic purposes of life. Plants, animals, birds, and fish do not exist as mere instruments for the sustenance of humankind. They exist in their own rights.

Nevertheless, there are meaningful differences between human and non-human living beings. For, the intrinsic hierarchy of sentience and consciousness in the Great Chain of Being cannot be denied. Man alone possesses the potential for awareness of conscience. This makes him morally culpable in ways that other living creatures are not. Man therefore deserves to be at the summit of the visible portion of this metaphysical ladder. Yet, his exalted stature is not one of power, but of responsibility. That he exists at the summit does not imply dominion over the rest of nature – but rather, stewardship of Earth and her myriad living beings. Although living itself entails taking life upon the slaughter-bench of Nature, we should practice a pain-centered ethics that ends the suffering we visit upon animals – through profit-oriented factory farming and other cruel practices – especially wet markets that trade in live animals. Overflowing with deep gratitude, not just to nature as a whole, but to the plants, animals, birds, and fish we rely on for food – and to Earth for sustaining us with boundless generosity – we should forge an economy that replaces "supply and demand" with "benediction and supplication."

If natural calamities belong to the middle tier, where nature is an echo-chamber of human thoughts and deeds, this means they are not, from the standpoint of man's free-will, fortuitous events forecasted by science, and governed and decreed by the laws of nature – but phenomena over which we possess indirect control. By controlling and sublimating our violent propensities – expressed through restless thoughts, churning with desires and passions – we should be able to control natural calamities that constitute violence in nature. If nature simply echoes human thoughts, then by controlling our thoughts we should have some indirect control over the natural calamities that reverberate our thoughts. But

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10 *Ibid.*, 35-36.
11 St. Francis of Assisi, *Canticle of the Sun* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

we do not possess the same indirect control over the violence of animals to one another. Instead we possess direct agency and will to control this type of non-human violence, through judicious, compassionate, scientific interventions in the world of animals.

What does this brief portrait of nature imply about Covid-19 and human agency? Inasmuch as this pandemic was caused by a virus – not a natural calamity – it cannot be an echo of human thought. We did not possess indirect control over the origin of this virus, for it was never an echo of human thoughts. To control it by controlling our thoughts, therefore, makes no sense. Instead, it was *direct* (unintentional) human agency that caused this virus to originate – through the human practices that prevailed in Wuhan's live animal market. Moreover, it was *direct* human agency (whether intentional or not) – that caused its transmission. To this extent we are the causative authors of Covid-19 transmissions – not nature alone. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, we transmit this virus, which spreads in accordance with nature's laws. Thus man and nature together are responsible for the origin and transmission of this virus. But, nature alone is responsible for its mutations, which follow nature's laws. The solution to this pandemic therefore lies not only in harnessing nature to test for this virus and to find a vaccine to protect us, but also in using our conscious moral agency to prevent its transmission.

What do Covid-19 and this brief portrait of nature imply about God? They imply that although transcendent *and* immanent, God possesses a terrible aspect, thus reaching beyond good and evil. There are at least four ways to define God – with the first two in terms of the architecture of divine omnipresence, and the third and fourth in terms of divine essence. Not only the ultimate transcendent-immanent Author of Immanence and nature, but God possesses a unique omnipresence. For Plotinus, this omnipresence is so total that the One is both transcendent and immanent, or, everywhere and nowhere (III.9(13).4).[12] For St. Augustine, God ensconces "creation" (his equivalent of Immanence) – but also permeates it with total divine omnipresence:

> I imagined the whole of your creation as a vast mass... I pictured you, O Lord, as encompassing this mass on all sides and penetrating it in every part, yet yourself infinite in every dimension... I imagined that your creation, which was finite, was filled by you, who were infinite.[13]

A second way to depict divine omnipresence is to envision God as the Substratum underlying all beings, so that it cannot help but be the inescapable all-shining quintessence of each. Equally present in each being, whether sentient or not, yet this Substratum acknowledges and harnesses the Great Chain of Being. For, it is manifested in different degrees by different beings, with man at the visible summit – given his greater capacity for actualizing and manifesting this divine quintessence in himself – compared to other sentient beings. Unlike these latter, man is therefore morally culpable, given his greater propinquity to the divine Substratum. This total transcendent-immanent omnipresence of God – "infinite in every dimension" as Augustine says[14] – implies a divine omnipotence that is om-

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12 Plotinus, *Ennead III*, 413.
13 Augustine, *Confessions*, 138.
14 *Ibid*.

nipresent in its jurisdiction, thus implying boundless divine necessity that posits bounds, not only upon human agency and freedom, but especially upon free-will. Although free in a limited sense, our will is tethered to the divine will, which rescues and guides it upward when it errs. Moreover, free-will is subject to the necessity that derives from the transcendental moral law. Finally, as a feature of the human mind, free-will is subject to the necessity promulgated by time-space-causation. Thus, Vivekananda asserts:

> No, the will is not free. How can it be? ... The Eastern philosophers ... propounded ... that the mind and the will are within time, space, and causation, the same as so-called matter; and that they are therefore bound by the law of causation. We think in time ... all that exists, exists in time and space. All is bound by the law of causation... Man's free agency is established in the soul ... ever free, boundless, eternal ... manifesting itself more and more through its instrument, the mind."[15]

A third way to portray God is to see divinity, not only as the One behind the many, or the originary origin of endless multiplicity, but also as Truth itself. God, who is both absolute substance and absolute nothingness, is all essence – this essence being Truth, and hence Reality. Thus St. Augustine refers to God as Truth, when he cries, "Eternal Truth, true Love, beloved Eternity – all this, my God, you are..."[16] For St. Catherine of Sienna, God is gentle first Truth.[17] For Gandhi (Passage I-282), "truth ... is but another name for God."[18] Yet, there are, as Vivekananda said, two kinds of truth, a lower and higher – "(1) that which is cognisable by the five ordinary senses of man, and by reasonings based thereon; (2) that which is cognisable by the subtle, supersensuous power of Yoga"– with science being knowledge acquired by the first.[19] As the higher, originary, supra-sensuous, and invisible Truth, God must be the cause of the lower visible correspondence notion of truth – with truthfulness distinguished from both. With Truth as divine essence, there is a fourth way to define God – namely Pure Consciousness. Not only Reality, Truth expresses itself also as absolute omniscience *qua* unsullied Consciousness at the helm of the hierarchy of degrees of lower consciousness – these being weaker manifestations of the solitary Pure Consciousness.

What does this brief portrait of God – including divine necessity that limits free-will – imply about the Covid-19 pandemic? Insofar as it has transpired within human history, which expresses the conjoined will of God and man, this pandemic had to have been permitted by God – thus proving that God cannot be merely Plato's Good[20] – but beyond good and evil. Almost the only way to reconcile divine will with a calamity as dreadful as this pandemic, is to acknowledge a *terrible* (not evil) dimension to divinity – hoisting God to a supra-moral

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15 Vivekananda, "Nature and Man," in *Complete Works*, vol. VI, 33-35.

16 Augustine, *Confessions*, 147.

17 Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. S. Noffke (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 8.

18 Merton, 39.

19 Vivekananda, "Hinduism and Shri Ramakrishna," in *Complete Works*, vol. VI, 181. In western thought, Vivekananda's first lower truth is the correspondence notion of truth, applied to the sciences and the scientific spirit.

20 Plato, "Book VI: The Sun," in *Greek Philosophy Thales to Aristotle*, ed. R. E. Allen (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 217.

stance, wherefrom the divine essence uses good and evil as mere instruments, to dispense divine justice and fulfill all requirements of truthfulness, ensuring that truth always triumphs.

Like God, nature too has a terrible aspect. But unlike God's, which is supra-moral, nature's terrible aspect is amoral in its manifestation. Moreover, the two are related. If we combine its aforementioned two higher tiers – conceiving of nature as a conjoined conduit of God and man, with both orchestrating nature – we should be able to trace the terrible in nature to the terrible aspect of God, but also to terrifying forms of evil in human thoughts and deeds. It is hard to believe that God would unleash non-moral punishments upon man in the form of natural calamities. At best, God *permits* these as natural outcomes of man's own iniquities, which elicit natural calamities from an echoing nature. God's terrible aspect therefore manifests itself, through nature's responses to our own terrifying iniquities – but also more directly through the divine moral law, of which, the Law of *Karma* is one example. Whenever humanity declines morally to new nadirs of evil, the collective consciousness darkens accordingly, spurring an echo from nature, in the form of natural calamities.

Yet, as already stated, a viral pandemic is not a natural calamity. Hence, Covid-19 is not an echo of human iniquities. Nevertheless, it is perhaps a long overdue response from nature to decades of human abuse. The deracinating passions inherent in advanced capitalism, have led mankind to a stark othering of nature, with human greed desiccating the natural world. Through this pandemic, nature is now rebalancing itself, in accordance with the laws that govern it. Hence, this pandemic is perhaps more nature's silent rebuke to man, for his environmental iniquities, than an echo of the collective human consciousness, or a punishment from God. It is perhaps nature's response to our egregious environmental iniquities that have ravaged Earth – a humble planet that is our only home in the universe. It is perhaps nature's way of rebalancing itself. Finally, this pandemic is perhaps the unconscious collective curse of animals upon humanity – a long overdue unintentional, and unconscious indictment of animals we have tormented.

Implications of a Pandemic
for Death, Predestination, Higher Faith – and likely Results

In the historical period leading up to the pandemic – for which, we have no name, since it is the inception of a period that reaches beyond postmodernity – our attitude towards death was as incongruous as it was inauspicious. Death denying, yet brimming with *Thanatos*, we drew a heightened death instinct from our heightened body consciousness – both avoiding and rushing to death. Beleaguered by suicidal tendencies, yet we clung to life, with not a shred of renunciation to help us let go. Oblivious of Epictetus' warning (Passage 7) – that if we fail to heed the call of death, we will be "tied up and thrown on the ship like livestock"[21] – we never knew what it was to prepare *philosophically* for death. Oblivious of a culture of life, we celebrated a culture of death. Fleeing all reminders of mortality, we celebrated funerals as festivals – not out of wisdom, but because we lacked the depth of

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21 Epictetus, 13.

soul to engage in sincere grief. We lacked as well, the philosophical labor necessary to understand and accept death. Always individuated, death, for us, was never collective. Incapable of contemplating the profound virtues that death presupposes – especially renunciation and detachment – these words of Epictetus (Passage 21) would have bewildered us:

> Let death and exile and everything that is terrible appear before your eyes every day, especially death; and you will never have anything contemptible in your thoughts or crave anything excessively.[22]

Neither a passage from one life to the next, through reincarnation, nor the crossroad of being and time, death, for us, was no more than an interruption of desire – a biological defeat to our desire-driven trajectory of a solo life, hanging in an eschatological vacuum – with neither fore nor after life. Until the pandemic shattered this complacency, we were foolish enough to try and control death – through artificial life-extending medical technology. Given its unerring certitude, death comes with absolute necessity – not freedom. It therefore does not lend itself to control by human hands.

Then Covid-19 appeared, merciless in its portents of death, with no respect whatsoever for the contingency in individual life situations. It was as if our unholy death instinct bore fruit in a pandemic of epic proportions, leaving us sober before historically unprecedented levels of collective death. Until this pandemic struck, we saw death as a uniquely individuated experience – notwithstanding the inherent universality of the death experience. Collective death was beyond our ken. For, we associated mass deaths with war, pestilence, and other woes that we believed happened only in the poorer nations of the world. But since Covid-19 spread world-wide, we see death with a literal universalism – as a near-simultaneous global experience. Revealing death in a novel and unique light, this pandemic draws from its global reach, to forge a tragic world-wide community, comprising those who have died from Covid-19.

Slowly, the bleak, sepulchral biological realities associated with Covid-19 seeped into our consciousness – but not the deeper philosophical meaning of death, nor the role of predestation. Lodged between the straitjacket of science, at one extreme, and religious extremism, at the other, we did not understand predestation as the will of God, especially in regards to death.

Epictetus, who co-mingles free-will with predestation, speaks of the call of death as something beyond human hands (Passage 7):

> On a voyage when your boat has anchored, if you want to get fresh water you may pick up a small shellfish and a vegetable by the way, but you must keep your mind fixed on the boat and look around frequently in case the captain calls. If he calls you must let all those other things go so that you will not be tied up and thrown on the ship like livestock. That is how it is in life too: if you are given a wife and a child instead of a vegetable and a small shellfish, that will not hinder you; but if the captain calls, let all those things go and run to the boat without turning back; and if you are old, do not even go very far from the boat, so that when the call comes you are not left behind.[23]

Centuries before Epictetus, Kṛṣṇa, the divine incarnation in the *Bhagavadgītā*, por-

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[22] Epictetus, 16.

[23] Epictetus, 13.

trays the same idea, when he says (X.34), "I am death, the all-devouring..."**24** – and (XI.33), "By Me alone are they [Arjuna's foes] slain already. Be thou merely the occasion [of slaying]..."**25**

Once we admit Epictetus' call of the "captain," or Kṛṣṇa's role as slayer – both implying that death is predestined – we acknowledge a *karmic* logic that selects the moment of death. Applied to Covid-19, this means that those who die in this pandemic have already received the call to death. Furthermore, even if the pandemic-driven immediate cause of death is universal, common, and collective – the call to death remains deeply individuated.

Yet, in terms of free-will and moral culpability, this pandemic defies the larger purpose of transcendental moral laws, like the Law of *Karma*. Expressing perhaps the *terrible* side of God, Covid-19 attacks in accordance with the infallible laws of nature, discovered by scientists. It is by carelessness and chance that we succumb to this virus – not moral conduct. Covid-19 is not a punishment for human iniquities.

Nevertheless, like death, this pandemic too had to have been predestined. Using Epictetus' "playwright" (Passage 17) we have to accept it as something ordained, or pre-written in the play of our collective history:

> Remember that you are an actor in a play, which is as the playwright wants it to be: short if he wants it short, long if he wants it long. If he wants you to play a beggar, play even this part skillfully, or a cripple, or a public official, or a private citizen. What is yours is to play the assigned part well. But to choose it belongs to someone else.**26**

Applied to Covid-19 this quotation means that for all its scientific explanations, this pandemic had to have been historically pre-destined, or ordained by the "playwright." That the Covid-19 pandemic started in Wuhan, even as China usurps the baton of History from America, to become the next superpower, cannot but be historically destined.

How should we respond to this pandemic, which invites a harmony of science and religious faith? Clearly, science alone is inadequate. At best it helps care for our bodies. It cannot fill the soul with strength. Alongside science we need a higher faith to inspire in us that cheerful stoicism that will help us cope with this viral nemesis. But what is faith? Is it irrational, and yet the source of our inmost moral strength? This can never be, for moral strength can never arise from the irrational. Faith has to be at least rational, if not more. Even as lower faith clashes with lower reason – because both are blind and blinding – higher faith surpasses and therefore *illumines* higher reason. Higher faith is therefore supra-rational. As Gandhi points out, such faith comes with myriad means of strengthening us:

> It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased, he is spiritually healthy, physically pure [poor], he rolls in spiritual riches.**27**

Hence, the right response before Covid-19 should be one of self-surrender and the

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24 *Bhagavadgītā*, trans. S. Radhakrishnan (Noida: Harper Element, 2014), 315.

25 *Bhagavadgītā*, 332.

26 Epictetus, 16.

27 M. K. Gandhi, "Prayer," in *Young India 1924-1926* (Madras: Current Thought Press, 1927), 1116. Also see *Young India*, Sep 24, 1925, 331.

highest faith on the one hand, and the full range of reason, on the other – including both the instrumental rationality inherent in the natural sciences and the moral reasoning we need for responsible conduct during a pandemic.

The lockdowns, social distancing and shrinking economies caused by this pandemic, have forced upon the retching soul characteristic of modernity, a necessary solitude and a compelling inwardness. Provided he spends this solitude in reflective inwardness, he will stem the flow of his self-hemorrhaging exteriorization. Such new found inwardness should fill him with renewed faith in his hidden powers of resilience. Covid-19 should make him see money and technology in a new light – as mere tools – not masters. For neither money, nor technology can ward off this disease.

But will this pandemic lead to renewed wisdom and heightened introspection? Will it put money and technology in proper perspective? Inasmuch as a virus cannot discriminate, will this pandemic diminish racism, despite the prevailing prejudice, even violence against Asians and persons of Chinese origin? Will it surpass political activism, diplomacy, and revolution, in bringing together humanity at a historically unprecedented, heightened level of cosmopolitanism? Will it help us understand how supply and demand lock into one another, forcing moral stagnation that cannot see beyond materialism? Given its stark reality that brooks no delusion, will this crisis open our eyes to the philosophical absurdity of "post-truth" and "alternate facts"? Will it overturn the main corollary of our techno-mania – our abhorrence of obsolescence that has made us render even Truth obsolete? Will it dissolve in the avaricious – who cannot face reality in its stark truth – all desire-laden, delusional, subjective forms of false optimism? Will it make the avaricious, who are willing to anger Nature, by plundering Earth, gain a new respect for the scientist? Will it mitigate our exponential longing for eternal economic growth? Above all, will this pandemic give us a new compassion for animals we have subjected to unspeakable abuses? Will it renew in us a pain-centered ethics towards the animals we hunt for sport, eat, experiment upon, sacrifice in religious rituals, and factory farm?

The power of higher faith is so great that it not only strengthens us, but also bestows a stark *metaphysical* realism that tempers idealism. In Platonic terms, it is the Good that causes this metaphysical realism, which yokes the gaze of the soul to the object it seeks to know, granting the power of knowing to the soul and irradiating the object known by truth and reality:

> When its gaze is fixed upon an object irradiated by truth and reality, the soul gains understanding and knowledge and is manifestly in possession of intelligence... This, then, which gives to the objects of knowledge their truth and to him who knows them his power of knowing, is the Form or essential nature of Goodness. It is the cause of knowledge and truth...[28]

While Plato contrasts this superior realism, to be directed to the Forms, with the dimmer sight of the soul, directed at the realm of becoming, we can, at this stage of advanced capitalism, contrast this metaphysical realism with the pecuniary realists of the

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[28] Plato, 220-221.

techno-business world.**29** Unlike pecuniary realism, with its limited window to the empirical world, metaphysical realism comes with a morally pure objectivity that bestows a gentle penetrating gaze that can see past appearances into the essence of things in the empirical world. Imbued by divine Light, metaphysical realism *reveals* – without intruding. It is, far more potent, for, as Plato implied, metaphysical realism draws its potency from its source – namely, the Good, which, being the origin of knowledge and truth, surpasses both in worth.**30**

Armed with this metaphysical realism and the powerful objectivity it implies, we reach some realistic conclusions about our likely responses to this pandemic. Not all will rely on faith to cope with this crisis. Not all will use social distancing as an opportunity for reflective inwardness. Some may use it for crime – especially domestic violence and abuse of animals. Not all will disregard race and other artificial dividers to feel a fraternity towards suffering persons. Indeed Covid-19 has vivified and revealed the existing chasmic social and economic inequalities that already divide mankind. Not all will divest technology of its false halo, or transfer faith from technology to a higher Power. In fact, some will use this crisis to reinforce their idolatrous adoration, celebrating Technology as the highest of all gods – citing its magnificence during this crisis. After all, but for e-mail, telephone, Twitter, social media, and the Internet – plus the devices used to test for and treat Covid-19 – most of us would not survive this pandemic. For the perspicacious, therefore, this crisis may transform *some* people – but not all.

Nevertheless this pandemic will leave behind historical footprints – not in physical forms, nor in the sands of time, but upon our souls – by transfiguring us inwardly. If nothing else, it should temper our raw sense of invincibility with a new found humility – renewing in us this conviction that for all our technological prowess, we remain frail before nature and destiny. It should remind us that a higher Power – which transcends the canopy of time-space-causation, and serves as the ultimate universal – ensconces all – including nature, history, and destiny. Ideally, this pandemic should imbue us with the highest faith that we are watched over by something more powerful than Plato's Good – a supra-moral Force, with a terrible aspect, ruling at the summit beyond good and evil.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has struck a blow to man's pride like nothing else in recent history. Not even the environmental crisis has connotations as immediately apocalyptic as this current threat from Covid-19 – which has confronted us with a sudden awareness of mortality, finitude, and our hidden reliance on a higher Power. While it fills us with dread, this pandemic also imbues us with a strange thrill, as our inauspicious death instinct rushes forth to greet Death prematurely. Proving that for all our differences, humanity is tied in a common destiny, this pandemic has eclipsed (but not obliterated) our political woes and the terrifying power of the hi-tech war. It has mocked the very notion of "superpower." It has

29 Plato, 220.
30 Plato, 221.

stemmed the flood of endless desires, which we actualize using technology. It has shattered the *ennui* inherent in prosperity. It has brought forth the pent-up sense of community long concealed in the human heart – longing for expression, but stifled by thick fogs of alienation. It has cleansed us of petty power tactics. It has bestowed upon us a rare same-sightedness towards friends *and* enemies. Confronted with our collective mortality, and the magnitude of this catastrophe, we are, before Covid-19, cleansed of petty discontentment. We have understood the frailty of human existence. If the environmental crisis confronted us with impending apocalyptic doom and a sense of collective mortality, then the Covid-19 pandemic has gone further in its historical immediacy.

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Neue Dialogperspektiven oder doch nicht?
Die ökumenischen Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche
nach dem Konzil auf Kreta

Abstract: This text analyses the document „Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World" in terms of possible new perspectives of the ecumenical dialogue? The analysis of the document and its reception so far, show that alongside a general willingness of the Orthodox Church to participate in the ecumenical dialogue, the document also contains certain methodological and practical suggestions for the continuation of the dialogue. Nevertheless, the document is obviously influenced by the fact it is adopted in the time of so called „the ecumenical winter".[1]

Key-words: Orthodox Church, Holy and Great Council, ecumenical dialogue

Das Heilige und Große Konzil der Orthodoxen Kirche, das auf Kreta vom 18. bis 26. Juni 2016 stattfand, wurde mit viel Spannung erwartet und verfolgt, und zwar nicht nur innerhalb aller (auch der abwesenden) Orthodoxen Kirchen, sondern auch innerhalb anderer christlichen Kirchen[2] (darunter natürlich vor allem innerhalb der Kirchen, die zusammen mit der Orthodoxen Kirche an den bilateralen oder multilateralen ökumenischen Dialogen teilnehmen). Die jahrzehntelangen Vorbereitungen des Konzils[3] und die „plötzliche" Entscheidung[4] der Vorsteher der lokalen Orthodoxen Kirchen, trotz einiger Schwierigkeiten, das Konzil doch einzuberufen, haben die Erwartungen an das Konzil steigen lassen. Stylianos Tsompanidis fasst diese (ökumenischen) Erwartungen folgendermaßen

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1 Dieser Text geht auf den gleichnamigen Vortrag, der am 29. Mai 2019 an dem Institut für ökumenische Forschung Hermannstadt gehalten wurde, zurück. Die hier vorgelegte schriftliche Fassung unterscheidet sich jedoch zu einem erheblichen Teil von dem Vortrag.

2 Vgl. Oeldemann, „Die Heilige und Große Synode der Orthodoxen Kirche auf Kreta […]", 49: „Interessanterweise stieß der ganze ‚vorkonziliare' Prozess auf westlicher Seite auf ein viel größeres Interesse als innerhalb der orthodoxen Lokalkirchen selbst. Während meines Theologiestudiums in den 1990er Jahren wurden die bis dahin erarbeiteten Konzilsvorlagen in Seminaren intensiv analysiert und diskutiert. Mit Spannung wurde von vielen westlichen Beobachtern daher auch die letzte Phase der Vorbereitung auf das Konzil verfolgt […]". Vgl. dazu auch Vletsis, „Rezeption als ‚Deus ex machina' […]", 153–159.

3 Der beinahe ganze Prozess der Vorbereitung wurde in Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, exzellent dokumentiert. Vgl. dazu auch Ionita, *Towards the Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church*.

4 Vgl. Ionita, „Auf dem Weg zum Heiligen und Großen Konzil der Orthodoxen Kirche", 90–91.

zusammen: „a) Man erhoffte, dass durch ihre Synode die zeitgenössische Orthodoxie *ihren Willen bestätigen wird*, zusammen mit den anderen Kirchen und Konfessionen *den Weg zu begehen*, der zur christlichen Einheit führt. In diesem Zusammenhang wünsche man sich, dass die Orthodoxie *erneut ihre Selbstverpflichtung bestätigen wird, den Dialog mit dem jeweiligen ‚Anderen' zu pflegen*, mit Menschen anderer Kultur und religiöser Überzeugungen. b) Man erwartete, dass die Synode die Stellung der Orthodoxen Kirche im zeitgenössischen ökumenischen Dialog überzeugender und definitiver bestimmen wird; dass sie denjenigen mit denen sie sich im Dialog befindet, erklärt wie die Orthodoxie ihre Beziehung zu ihnen erlebt und wie sie ihre Dialogpartner wahrnimmt."[5] Tsompanidis behauptet weiter, dass sich die Erwartungen nicht als falsch erwiesen haben und schreibt weiter: „Die Entscheidung der Heiligen und Großen Synode von Kreta über die ‚Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche zu der übrigen christlichen Welt' ist historisch und wirklich bedeutsam [...]"[6]. Ohne dieser Behauptung sofort widersprechen zu möchten, soll hier eine etwas andere Meinung vorangestellt werden, um das Spektrum verschiedener Haltungen gegenüber diesem Dokument zu schildern: „Den Inhalt des Dokumentes ‚Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche zu der übrigen christlichen Welt' [...] kann man im Großen und Ganzen mit dem Stichwort Erklärungsbedürftigkeit bezeichnen [...]. Es finden sich dort mehrere Ambivalenzen und Antinomien und auch eine Art von Kryptographie, Dialektik oder eine gewisse Apophatik. Im Verzicht auf die letzte Deutlichkeit in prekären Fragen ist manchmal der Wille zu spüren, zentralistisch zu sein, und sogar der fehlende Mut zu einem klaren Wort."[7] Diese (nicht unbedingt entgegengestellten) Stellungnahmen zeugen einerseits von großen Erwartungen von dem Dokument „Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche zu der übrigen christlichen Welt" und andererseits aber auch von den verschiedenen Erwartungen an dieses Dokument und darüber hinaus an das Konzil.

Die Differenziertheit von Sichtweisen hinsichtlich dieses Dokumentes war natürlich auch vor dem Konzil kein Geheimnis. Die Bulgarische Orthodoxe Kirche ist u.a.[8] wegen dieses Dokumentes dem Panorthodoxen Konzil ferngeblieben, wobei einige ihrer Vertreter eine sog. „exklusive Ekklesiologie"[9] explizit vor dem Konzil vertraten.[10] Diese bulgarischen Geistlichen waren aber in ihrer anti-ökumenischen Rhetorik jedoch nicht allein.

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5 Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 81.

6 Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 81.

7 Pilipenko, „Zum Ökumene-Dokument der Orthodoxen Synode auf Kreta [...]", 61.

8 Vgl. Illert, „Die Bulgarische Orthodoxe Kirche und die Heilige und Große Synode", 42–47.

9 Vgl. dazu auch Bouteneff, „Ecclesiology and Ecumenism", 378–381.

10 Vgl. Illert, „Die Bulgarische Orthodoxe Kirche und die Heilige und Große Synode", 44: „Ein Blick auf den innerbulgarischen Diskurs, der der Absage der BOK vorausging, zeigt, dass der Synodaltext zum Verhältnis der Orthodoxie zu den anderen Kirchen ein Kernpunkt der bulgarischen Gravamina war. So erklärte Metropolit Gabriel von Lowetsch in einem Schreiben an Patriarch Neofit vom 23. März 2016 seinen Widerstand gegen die Vorlage mit einer exklusiven Ekklesiologie. *Die orthodoxe Kirche hat den Begriff der ‚Einheit aller' immer derart verstanden, dass alle die, die in Häresie oder Schisma gefallen sind, zuerst zum orthodoxen Glauben zurückkehren müssen und der heiligen Kirche gehorsam sein müssen und erst dann durch die Buße wieder in die heilige Kirche*

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Das Ökumene-Dokument stieß auf viel Missverständnis und Ablehnung nicht nur in antiökumenischen Kreisen[11], sondern auch bei denen, die mit dem Text des Dokumentes nicht zufrieden waren und die man keinesfalls einfach als Anti-Ökumeniker abstempeln darf. Während des Konzils wurde dieser Text am heftigsten diskutiert und sogar nach seiner Annahme durch das Konzil waren einige Bischöfe nicht dazu bereit, das Dokument zu unterschreiben[12].

Allein aus dieser knappen Einleitung ist es offensichtlich, dass die ökumenischen Beziehungen und somit das Dokument „Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche zu der übrigen christlichen Welt" viel Aufmerksamkeit auf sich gezogen haben, sowohl vor als auch während und nach dem Konzil. Es drängen sich nun natürlich viele Fragen auf, z. B., ob sich, und wenn ja, wie, diese große Aufmerksamkeit und entgegengesetzten Haltungen auf den Text des Dokumentes zurückprojiziert haben? Wie soll man die letzte (d.h. promulgierte) Fassung des Textes vor dem Hintergrund seiner Entstehungsgeschichte deuten? Ohne den Anspruch zu erheben, auf diese (und viele andere) Fragen eine definitive Antwort anzubieten bzw. das Ökumene-Dokument bis ins Detail zu analysieren, wird in diesem Artikel der Versuch unternommen, auf die folgende Frage zu antworten: bietet dieses Dokument neue ökumenische Dialogperspektiven und wie sollen sich die ökumenischen Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirche nach dem Konzil von Kreta gestalten?

Die Bejahung des Dialogs

Hinsichtlich des vielfältigen ökumenischen Engagements der meisten Orthodoxen Kirchen und eines breiten Netzes von sowohl bilateralen als auch multilateralen ökumenischen Beziehungen konnte man mit irgendwelchen Entscheidungen, die dieses ökumenische Erbe gefährden könnten, auf dem Konzil kaum rechnen. Auch im ganzen vorkonziliaren Vorbereitungprozess konnte man keinen Anhalt für den Verdacht finden, dass die ökumenischen Beziehungen auf dem Konzil auf eine grundsätzliche Ablehnung stoßen könnten. Nichtsdestoweniger darf die Bedeutung der Tatsache, dass alle, auf dem Konzil versammelten Orthodoxen Kirchen, einen starken Willen für die Fortsetzung des ökumenischen Dialogs bezeugt haben, nicht heruntergespielt werden. Sowohl in der *Botschaft* als auch in der *Enzyklika* des Konzils wird betont, dass die Orthodoxe Kirche „großen Wert auf den Dialog legt, vor allem mit den nicht-orthodoxen Christen"[13]. Im Ökumene-Dokument werden diese Behauptungen weiter expliziert und es wird gesagt, dass die Ortho-

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aufgenommen werden können [...]. Die verlorene Einheit der Christen ist [...] niemals verloren gegangen [...]. Neben der heiligen orthodoxen Kirche gibt es keine anderen Kirchen, nur Häresien und Schismen. Es ist dogmatisch, theologisch und kanonisch völlig unrichtig, diese Gemeinschaften Kirchen zu nennen. [...] Genau genommen ist die Rückkehr der Häretiker und Schismatiker zum wahren Glauben notwendig [...]. Gott sei Dank dafür, dass die BOK ihre Mitgliedschaft im Weltrat der Kirchen aufgab und so ihrer Missbilligung seiner Aktivitäten Ausdruck verlieh, da sie nicht ein Teil einer Organisation sein kann, wo sie als eine von vielen, als ein Zweig der einen Kirche betractet wird."

11 Vgl. Vlantis, „Der Angst vor dem Geist [...]", 32f.

12 Vgl. Kisić, „Die Fundamente stärken [...]", 55f.

13 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 32; Vgl. auch Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 54: „In diesem

doxe Kirche in ihrem tiefen kirchlichen Selbstbewusstsein unerschütterlich glaubt, „dass sie eine führende Stellung in der Frage der Förderung der christlichen Einheit in der heutigen Welt einnimmt. […] Insbesondere hat sie eine führende Rolle in der heutigen Suche nach Mitteln und Wegen zur Wiederherstellung der Einheit derer gesucht, die an Christus glauben. Von Anfang an hat sie in der Ökumenischen Bewegung mitgewirkt und zu ihrer Gestaltwerdung und weiterer Entwicklung beigetragen."[14]

Angesichts der derzeitigen ökumenischen Stimmung und der ganzen Situation in der Ökumene sind diese Sätze von großer Bedeutung. Man hört nicht selten von einem „Winter in der Ökumene"[15] und ebenso davon, dass sich die ökumenische Bewegung in einer Art „Bedenkzeit"[16] befindet. Man muss mit diesen Einschätzungen nicht unbedingt ganz einverstanden sein, aber es wird schwierig der Tatsache zu widersprechen, dass der gegenwärtige ökumenische Dialog von einer gewissen Ernüchterung gekennzeichnet ist, und zwar besonders dann, wenn von Zukunftsaussichten die Rede ist.

Darüber hinaus sind fast alle Orthodoxen Kirchen noch mit einer weiteren Herausforderung, wenn es um die Gegenwart und die Zukunft des ökumenischen Dialog geht, konfrontiert. Neben der Tatsache, dass die ökumenischen Beziehungen für eine nicht zu unterschätzende Anzahl von orthodoxen Gläubigen nicht gerade hoch auf der kirchlichen Agenda steht, gibt es auch sog. „ultra-konservative" Grupierungen oder „Zeloten", die unter dem Vorwand der Verteidigung der „wahren Orthodoxie" jeglichen ökumenischen Dialog grundsätzlich ablehnen.[17] Wenngleich sie in ihrer antiökumenischen Haltung keinesfalls die Mehrheit der orthodoxen Gläubigen vertreten, darf man ihre Stimmen nicht einfach ignorieren, weil sie manchmal bei dem Kirchenvolk eine gewisse Aufmerksamkeit finden.[18] Dass sie nicht ignoriert werden sollen, beweist allein die Tatsache, dass solche Gruppierungen im Ökumene-Dokument explizit erwähnt sind: „Die Orthodoxe Kirche

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Geiste anerkennt *die Orthodoxe Kirche* die Notwendigkeit von Zeugnis und Opfer und *hat schon immer dem Dialog eine Große Bedeutung beigemessen*, besonders dem Dialog mit nicht-orthodoxen Christen."

14 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 78.

15 Vgl. Bieber, „Winter oder Frühling in der Ökumene […]": „Wenn man die jahreszeitlichen Atmosphären von Winter oder Frühling auf geschichtliche Komplexe überträgt, so sind das metaphorische Vollzüge, die natürlich eminent vom jeweiligen Standpunkt des Subjekts abhängen. Anders als im reellen Winter, dessen Kälte letztlich objektiv für jedermann nachvollziehbar und quantitativ messbar ist, bleibt die Metapher eines ‚Winters in der Ökumene' massiv an subjektive Wertmaßstäbe gebunden. Schon der Zeitrahmen der Bewertung spielt eine erhebliche Rolle. Denke ich in Jahrhunderten, so steht das letzte halbe sicherlich im Zeichen eines Aufbruchs in der Ökumene. Schaue ich dagegen eher kurzfristig auf die letzten Jahre, so scheint eine gewisse Erschöpfung des ökumenischen Projekts festzustellen zu sein: die Wege sind erforscht, die Möglichkeiten sind ausgelotet, bei vielen Gläubigen scheint das Interesse an ökumenischen Fragen zu schwinden."

16 Vgl. Kisić, „Der Katholisch-Orthodoxe Dialog […] ", 89.

17 Für die Hintergründe dieser Haltung vgl. u. a. Makrides, „Orthodoxer Antiokzidentalismus und Antikatholizismus […]".

18 Vgl. dazu Hainthaler, „Nach der ‚Heiligen und Großen Synode' von Kreta 2016 […]", 119f: „Angesichts von Anfeindungen von außen durch Zeloten, wie in Paphos 2009, wo Demonstranten den Mitgliedern der Dialogkommission den Weg zur orthodoxen Kapelle versperrt mit Plakaten, die den Papst als Wurzel allen Übels bezeichneten, oder behaupteten, die Orthodoxie wolle zurück in die Sklaverei, erlebten wir Nebeneinander in der Betroffenheit. Wenn auch die Haltung der Sogenannten Zeloten von den meisten Mitgliedern

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betrachtet alle Bestrebungen, die Einheit der Kirche zu brechen, wie sie von Individuen oder Gruppen unter dem Vorwand des Erhalts der angeblichen Verteidigung der wahren Orthodoxie unternommen werden, als verwerflich"[19].

Auf einer Seite hat man also das gewisse „Bedenken" beim ökumenisch engagierten orthodoxen Christen, bzw. vielleicht sogar eine ökumenische Skepsis (oder die „tiefe Krise, die in der Ökumenischen Bewegung entstanden ist"[20]) und auf der anderen Seite offene Ablehnung bei wenigen aber „lautstarken" Gläubigen, die jegliche ökumenischen Kontakte ablehnen. Wenn sich die Konzilsväter unter diesen Umständen (ganz zu schweigen von vielen anderen Faktoren, die den ökumenischen Dialog heute belasten) für eine weitere Fortsetzung des ökumenischen Dialogs stark und unmissverständlich einsetzen, dann kann diese Entscheidung in der Tat als „historisch und wirklich bedeutsam"[21] charakterisiert werden. Neben den bereits angegebenen Stellen, die diese Bereitschaft zum Ausdruck bringen, ist die Aussage, das der ökumenische Dialog der Natur und der Geschichte der Orthodoxen Kirche keinesfalls fremd ist von besonderer Bedeutung: „Dank des ökumenischen und menschenfreundlichen Geistes, der sie auszeichnet, und im Gebet gemäß göttlicher Anordnung, dass alle Menschen gerettet werden und zur Erkenntnis der Wahrheit gelangen (1 Tim 2,4), hat die Orthodoxe Kirche sich darüber hinaus stets um die Wiederherstellung der christlichen Einheit bemüht. Daher ist die orthodoxe Teilnahme an der Bewegung zur Wiederherstellung der Einheit mit anderen Christen in der Einen, Heiligen, Katholischen und Apostolischen Kirche der Natur und Geschichte der Orthodoxen Kirche keineswegs fremd, sondern steht im Einklang mit dem apostolischen Glauben und der apostolischen Tradition unter neuen geschichtlichen Umständen."[22] Diese Aussage entschärft nicht nur die üblichen Vorwürfen der anti-ökumenischen Gruppierungen, die die ökumenischen Bestrebungen der Orthodoxen Kirche als eine „Neuerung" und der kirchlichen Überlieferung fremd darstellen, sondern liefern die theologische Grundlage für das orthodoxe Engagement in dem ökumenischen Dialog, die auf dem Zeugnis der Heiligen Schrift und der Überlieferung fundiert ist.

Die grundsätzliche Bejahung des ökumenischen Dialogs erstreckt sich sowohl auf die bilateralen Dialoge, auf die die Orthodoxen Kirchen sowieso einen großen Wert legen, als auch auf die multilateralen Dialoge, wobei neben der Erwähnung mehrerer interchristlicher Organisationen und regionaler Körperschaften (die Konferenz der Europäischen Kirche, der Rat der Kirchen im Mittleren Osten, der Gesamtafrikanische Kirchenrat) dem Weltrat der Kirchen besondere Achtung geschenkt wird.[23] Die Arbeit des ÖRK und sein Beitrag zum ökumenischen Dialog wird generell sehr positiv bewertet und besagt, dass der

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der Dialog-Kommission nicht geteilt wird, so ist diese Position eine Realität der Kirche, die im Rahmen der Dialog-Kommission erstmals 2009 in Paphos spürbar wurde und sicher sehr ernst zu nehmen ist."

19 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 85.

20 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 80.

21 Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 81.

22 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 78f.

23 Vgl. Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 82f.

ÖRK die Einheit der christlichen Welt fördert bzw. dass innerhalb des ÖRK die Einheit gesucht wird.[24] Wenn es aber darum geht, wie der ÖRK dieser Einheit dient, sehen die Orthodoxen Kirchen die Arbeit des ÖRK anscheinend nicht vornehmlich im doktrinären Kontext, was für die Orthodoxen Kirchen vorrangig ist, sondern eher in „Förderung der friedlichen Koexistenz und Zusammenarbeit in den wichtigsten sozio-politischen Herausforderungen".[25] Die Rolle der Kommission „Glaube und Kirchenverfassung" wird andererseits vor allem im Kontext ihres theologischen Beitrags angesehen und bewertet. In Paragraph 21 des Ökumene-Dokuments steht, dass die theologischen Texte dieser Kommission „einen bemerkenswerten Schritt der Ökumenischen Bewegung zur Annäherung der Christen darstellen".[26] Anschließend wird aber abgrenzend hinzugefügt: „Allerdings hat die Orthodoxe Kirche Vorbehalte in Bezug der Schlüsselfragen von Glaube und Kirchenverfassung, insofern die nicht-orthodoxen Kirchen und Konfessionen vom wahren Glauben der Einen, Heiligen, Katholischen und Apostolischen Kirche abgewichen sind".[27]

Die Spuren der Entstehungszeit

Ohne die grundsätzliche Bejahung des ökumenischen Dialogs irgendwie in Frage zu stellen, darf diese abgrenzende Aussage als paradigmatisch für das ganze Ökumene-Dokument angesehen werden. Auf der einen Seite wird das ökumenische Engagement generell unterstützt und gefördert, aber auf der anderen Seite findet man Aussagen, die eher auf die Abgrenzung zielen könnten.[28] So wird z. B. die Bedeutung der Zusammenarbeit im ÖRK gelobt aber anschließend wird hinzugefügt, dass die orthodoxe Mitwirkung im ÖRK keinesfalls bedeutet, dass die Orthodoxe Kirche weder die „Gleichheit der Konfessionen" akzeptiert noch, dass sie „die Einheit der Kirche als einen interkonfessionellen Kompromiss"[29] versteht. Um die orthodoxe Mitgliedschaft im ÖRK nicht im falschen Lichte erscheinen zu lassen, werden ebenso einige Teile der Toronto-Erklärung von 1950, die die ekklesiologische Voraussetzungen für die orthodoxe Mitarbeit im ÖRK enthalten, angegeben. Oeldemann merkt jedoch, dass an dieser Stelle nur die abgrenzenden Passagen der Toronto-Erklärung im Ökumene-Dokument zitiert wurden („keine ‚Über-Kirche', keine Kirchenunionen, keine Änderungen der Ekklesiologie, keine Anerkennung der anderen Kirchen im vollen Sinne des Wortes"[30]), während die positiven Aussagen über die anderen Kirchen aus demselben Dokument keine Erwähnung finden. In diesem Lichte darf man auch die Behauptung, die sich unmittelbar nach dem Paragraphen über die ÖRK bzw.

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24 Vgl. Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 82f.

25 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 83.

26 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 85.

27 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 85.

28 Oeldemann, „Die Heilige und Große Synode der Orthodoxen Kirche auf Kreta [...]", 53 sieht darin ein Zugeständnis an anti-ökumenische Kreise: „Auf der anderen Seite finden sich im Ökumene-Dokument aber auch eine ganze Reihe von Aussagen, die den Bedenkenträgern und Gegnern des ökumenischen Dialogs entgegenkommen."

29 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 83.

30 Oeldemann, „Die Heilige und Große Synode der Orthodoxen Kirche auf Kreta [...]", 53.

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vor dem Paragraphen über die Kommission „Glaube und Kirchenverfassung" im Dokument befindet, deuten: „Die Perspektiven für die Durchführung theologischer Dialoge zwischen der Orthodoxen Kirche und der übrigen christlichen Welt werden immer auf der Grundlage der kanonischen Prinzipien der orthodoxen Ekklesiologie und der kanonischen Kriterien der bereits ausgeprägten Tradition bestimmt".[31]

Auch in den anderen Konzilsdokumenten lässt sich das, was Tsompanidis als „apologetischer Ton"[32] charakterisiert, erkennen. Der Satz aus der Enzyklika „Die Kirche zeigt Empfindsamkeit für jene, die sich selbst von der Gemeinschaft mit ihr getrennt haben, und sorgt sich um jene, die ihre Stimme nicht verstehen" lässt den Eindruck entstehen, dass die Schuld für die Spaltungen nur auf einer Seite liegt.[33] Tsompanidis meint, dass diese Ausdrucksweise als Zugeständnis an die Gegner des ökumenischen Dialogs interpretiert werden kann und schreibt dabei: „Dieser Eindruck wird vom in den Texten mehrfachwiederholten, Refrain über das ‚Zeugnis der Orthodoxie' gestärkt, das lediglich als eine ad-extra-Bewegung wahrgenommen wird, ohne die Bereitschaft zur Beschenkung vom Anderen und zu einer gegenseitigen Bereicherung erkennen zu lassen. Dieser Geist hat nichts mit den Erklärungen von z.B. der 1. Vorkonziliaren Panorthodoxen Konferenz in Chambésy von 1976 zu tun, in der unterstrichen wurde, dass das Zeugnis der Orthodoxie von ‚doppelter Nützlichkeit' sei; es ist Gabe und Empfang, Bewusstwerden *der Verantwortung, die wir alle tragen für die Spaltung der Christenheit*"[34]

Es kann also einerseits berechtigt sein, diese und andere (hier nicht angegebene Stellen) in einem „apologetischen Ton" zu deuten und sie als Zugeständnisse an die Gegner des ökumenischen Dialogs zu verstehen. Andererseits kann man sie durchaus auch als (gewünschte) Klarstellung in Hinsicht auf die orthodoxen Standpunkte im ökumenischen Dialog verstehen. Die ungeschönte Klarheit der Positionen im heutigen ökumenischen Dialog ist jedenfalls conditio sine qua non für die weitere Gestaltung des ökumenischen Dialogs, wenn diese manchmal auch „scharf" ausfallen darf.

Ungeachtet dessen, ob man die abgrenzenden Aussagen als Zugeständnisse oder Klarstellungen interpretiert, wird es schwierig der Tatsache zu widersprechen, dass die vom Konzil angenomme Fassung des Ökumene-Dokumentes in manchen Hinsichten konservativer ist als in früheren Fassungen dieses Textes, die während des Vorbereitungsprozesses verabschiedet wurde. Als mittlerweile „klassisches" Beispiel dieser Tendenz könnten

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[31] Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 84.

[32] Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 85.

[33] Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 86. Dagegen ist im *Unitatis redintegratio* etwas anderes zu lesen: „In dieser einen und einzigen Kirche Gottes sind schon von den ersten Zeiten an Spaltungen entstanden, die der Apostel aufs schwerste tadelt und verurteilt; in den späteren Jahrhunderten aber sind ausgedehntere Verfeindungen entstanden, und es kam zur Trennung recht großer Gemeinschaften von der vollen Gemeinschaft der katholischen Kirche, oft nicht ohne Schuld der Menschen auf beiden Seiten."

[34] Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode [...]", 86.

die umstrittensten Sätze des Ökumene-Dokuments angeführt werden: „Die Orthodoxe Kirche erkennt jedoch die historische Benennung anderer nicht-orthodoxer christlicher Kirchen und Konfessionen, die nicht mit ihr in Gemeinschaft stehen, an. Sie glaubt aber, dass ihre eigenen Beziehungen zu diesen Gemeinschaften auf der so zügig und objektiv wie möglich erfolgenden Klärung der gesamten ekklesiologischen Frage beruhen sollten [...]"[35] Ein einfacher Vergleich mit früheren Fassungen des Textes reicht, um die Unterschiede im Verständnis des ekklesiologischen Status der anderen christlichen Gemeinschaften zu erkennen: „Sie erkennt die faktische Existenz aller christlichen Kirchen und Konfessionen an und glaubt zugleich, dass ihre Beziehungen zu diesen auf der Grundlage einer möglichst baldigen und objektiven, von diesen Kirchen vorzunehmenden Klärung der gesamten ekklesiologischen Frage beruhen müssen [...]"[36] (III. Vorkonziliaren panorthodoxen Konferenz, 1986) und „The Orthodox Church acknowledges the historical existence of other Christian Churches and Confessions that are not in communion with her and believes that her affiliation with them should be based on a speedy and objective elucidation of all ecclesiological topics [...]"[37] (V. Panorthodoxen vorkonziliaren Konferenz, 2015). Nach vielen Diskussionen wurde also der Ausdruck „die historische Benennung" anstatt von „der faktischen Existenz" oder „the historical existence" adoptiert.

Die Debatte über das Ökumene-Dokument bzw. besonders über die Bezeichnung „Kirche" für nicht-orthodoxe Christen, brach schon vor dem Konzil aus. Die Heilige Synode der Kirche Griechenlands hat an Ihrer Sitzung im 26. Mai 2016. beschlossen, dass die Katholische Kirche keine eigentliche „Kirche" ist, so dass für sie die Bezeichnung „Konfession" oder „Gemeinschaft" zu verwenden ist.[38] Die Heilige Synode des Patriarchats Bulgariens und die Vertreter des Berges Athos lehnten es ebenso vor dem Konzil ab, die Bezeichnung „Kirche" für andere Christen zu benutzen, während die Georgische Kirche auch einige Bedenken hinsichtlich der Frage, ob die Katholische Kirche als Kirche zu betrachten ist, hatte.[39] Bereits vor dem Konzil waren die Schwierigkeiten hinsichtlich der Frage des ekklesiologischen Charakters der anderen christlichen Gemeinschaften offensichtlich und deswegen war das Ökumene-Dokument für viele Konzilsteilnehmer das Hauptproblem des Konzils.[40] Der mühsam erzielte Konsens „die historische Benennung" sagt nichts von dem ekklesialen Charakter anderer christlicher Gemeinschaften und zwar auch nichts von den Kirchen, mit denen die Orthodoxe Kirche jahrzehntelang offizielle bilaterale Dialoge führt, was nicht ohne Verwunderung festgestellt wurde.[41] Diese Formel bleibt natürlich Interpretationsoffen und auch Interpretationsbedürftig, aber sie hat – und für den weit-

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35 Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 79.

36 Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 534f.

37 „Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World".

38 Vgl. Hainthaler, „Nach der ‚Heiligen und Großen Synode' von Kreta 2016 [...]", 122.

39 Vgl. Hainthaler, „Nach der ‚Heiligen und Großen Synode' von Kreta 2016 [...]", 122f.

40 Vgl. Максим, *Дневник са Сабора*, 68.

41 Das hat schon einige Reaktionen ausgelöst. Vgl. Hainthaler, „Nach der ‚Heiligen und Großen Synode' von Kreta 2016", 122ff; Destivelle, „Das Heilige und Große Konzil von Kreta. Einige Eindrücke und persönliche Überlegungen", 118.

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eren ökumenischen Dialog ist gerade das m. E. von Belang – keiner christlichen Kirche ihr Kirchen-Sein abgesprochen und somit ist die Tür des Dialogs offen geblieben, was angesichts des ökumenischen Momentums auch nicht wenig ist.[42] Andrerseits kann man zusammen mit Oeldemann die durchaus berechtigte Frage stellen, „wie die Orthodoxe Kirche diesen Spagat zwischen Dialogbereitschaft und Verweigerung jeder Form ekklesialer Anerkennung auf Dauer aushalten will"[43].

Neue Dialogperspektiven?

An Ende des Ökumene-Dokuments wird das Bewusstsein über die neuen Entwicklungen in der ökumenischen Bewegung klar geäußert: „Die Orthodoxe Kirche ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass die Bewegung zur Wiederherstellung der christlichen Einheit zur Zeit neue Formen annimmt, um auf neue Umstände zu antworten und sich neuen Herausforderungen der Welt von heute zu stellen. Das fortgesetzte Zeugnis der Orthodoxen Kirche für die gespaltene christliche Welt auf der Grundlage der apostolischen Tradition und des apostolischen Glaubens ist unbedingt erforderlich"[44]. Wie soll sich dieses Zeugnis in der sich verändernden ökumenischen Bewegung aber gestalten und hat die Orthodoxe Kirche mit dem Ökumene-Dokument versucht, an diese schwierige Frage heranzugehen? Öffnet das Konzil vielleicht neue ökumenische Dialogperspektiven? Eine eindeutige und klare Antwort auf diese Fragen wird man sowohl in den Konzilsdokumenten als auch in verschiedenen Reaktionen auf die Dokumente und das Konzil selbst vergebens suchen.

An erster Stelle soll bedacht werden, dass schon seit der Revision des Themenkatalogs auf der I. Panorthodoxen Vorkonziliaren Konferenz (1976)[45] ganz klar war, dass im Fokus des Konzils vor allem innerorthodoxe Fragen stehen sollen bzw. das Konzil sollte, natürlich nicht ausschließlich, aber vornehmlich ad-intra gerichtet sein. An dieser Ausrichtung hat sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten bzw. bis zum Konzil wenig geändert. Dasselbe gilt für das Ökumene-Dokument und deswegen merkt Pilipenko mit Recht: „Letztendlich bleibt als Eindruck von dem Text, dass er nicht als Doktrin oder nach außen gerichtete Vision konzipiert wurde sondern vielmehr die Rolle eines Impulses zum innerorthodoxen Gespräch im Bereich der Ökumene und dadurch zur Diskussion über die Ekklesiologie spielen sollte"[46]. Von so einem ad-intra gerichteten Dokument und gerade in diesem ökumenischen und innerorthodoxen Momentum neue Dialogperspektiven zu erwarten wäre jedoch übertrieben.

Das bedeutet wiederum nicht, dass das Ökumene-Dokument samt den anderen Konzilsdokumenten nur die orthodoxen Stellungnahmen oder Impulse zu den innerorthodoxen Gesprächen vorstellen. Die grundsätzliche Bejahung des Dialogs wird durch

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[42] Für die detailliertere Analyse dieser Frage und die Reaktionen von einigen Konzilsteilnehmer vgl. u. a. Tsompanidis, „Orthodoxe Kirche und Ökumenische Bewegung nach der Heiligen und Großen Synode", 84f; Kisić, „Die Fundamente stärken [...]", 53–55.

[43] Oeldemann, Johannes, „Nach dem Konzil [...]", 35.

[44] Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 85f.

[45] Vgl. Kallis, *Auf dem Weg zu einem Heiligen und Großen Konzil*, 424.

[46] Pilipenko, „Zum Ökumene-Dokument der Orthodoxen Synode auf Kreta [...]", 60.

die Definition des eigenen Selbstverständnisses untermauert: „Die *Orthodoxe Kirche*, die dieser einmütigen apostolischen Tradition und sakramentalen Erfahrung treu bleibt, stellt die *authentische Fortführung der einen, heiligen, katholischen und apostolischen Kirche* dar, wie sie im Glaubensbekenntnis bezeugt ist und in der Lehre der Väter bestätigt wird"[47]. Mit dem Ausdruck „die authentische Fortführung" vermeidet die Orthodoxe Kirche „eine exklusivistische Identifizierung der Orthodoxen Kirche mit der Kirche Jesu Christi und lässt Raum für theologische Reflexionen über den ekklesiologischen Status der anderen christlichen Kirchen"[48]. Es bleibt aber vor allem wichtig, dass der ökumenische Dialog aufgrund dieser ekklesiologischen Prinzipien nicht gefährdet wurde, was man vor dem Konzil nicht als ganz abgesichert ansehen konnte.

In den Konzilsdokumenten (vor allem natürlich im Ökumene-Dokument) befinden sich darüber hinaus auch methodologische und praktische Hinweise für die Durchführung des ökumenischen Dialogs. Im Paragraph 13, wo von den spezifischen Herausforderungen jedes einzelnen ökumenischen Dialogs die Rede ist, steht: „Die bestehenden theologischen und ekklesiologischen Differenzen erlauben es jedoch, eine gewisse Rangordnung der Herausforderungen auf dem Weg zu diesem panorthodoxen Ziel [sc. „die endgültige Wiederherstellung der Einheit"] aufzustellen"[49]. Der Ausdruck „eine gewisse Rangordnung der Herausforderungen" assoziiert sofort (mit Recht?) mit der „Hierarchie der Wahrheiten"[50] aber seine praktische Anwendung und somit seine methodologische Relevanz und Tragweite ist noch abzuwarten.[51] Unter den erwähnten praktischen Hinweisen sei nur noch eine fast beiläufige aber unglaublich wichtige Bemerkung: „Dabei ist vorausgesetzt, dass die gesamte Kirche über die Entwicklungen der verschiedenen Dialoge informiert bleibt"[52]. Die Ablehnung der Entwürfe von Konzilsdokumenten, die man in einigen orthodoxen Kirchen vor dem Konzil beobachten konnte, hatte u. a. auch damit zu tun, dass viele Gläubige sowohl über diese Entwürfe als auch über den ganzen Vorbereitungsprozess ungenügend informiert werden.

Die Bedeutung des Ökumene-Dokumentes sowie des ganzen Konzils für die weitere Gestaltung der ökumenischen Beziehungen der Orthodoxen Kirchen darf weder unter- noch überschätzt werden. Die Annahme dieses Dokumentes auf dem Konzil hat offensichtlich keine großen Wellen geschlagen, aber mit seiner eventuellen Ablehnung durch das Konzil hätte es anders aussehen können. Insofern dürfte die nüchterne Beurteilung von Heller auch eine treffende sein: „Im Hinblick auf die bestehende Situation innerhalb der Orthodoxen Kirchen und innerhalb der ökumenischen Bewegung scheint der Text die derzeitigen Realitäten zum Ausdruck zu bringen"[53].

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[47] Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 39.

[48] Oeldemann, „Die Heilige und Große Synode der Orthodoxen Kirche auf Kreta", 55.

[49] Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 80.

[50] Vgl. Gavrilyuk, Paul L., „The Future Pan-Orthodox Council on Relations with the Non-Orthodox Other [...]".

[51] Vgl. Kisić, „Die Fundamente stärken [...]", 55f.

[52] Hallensleben, *Einheit in Synodalität*, 80.

[53] Heller, „Das (Heilige und Große) Konzil der Orthodoxen Kirche [...]", 72.

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Book Reviews

Norman Russell, *Gregory Palamas and the Making of Palamism in the Modern Age*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019.

Dans *Gregory Palamas and The Making of Palamism in the Modern Age*, Norman Russell a produit une étude exceptionnelle d'une réelle importance. Le volume est vraiment deux livres en un. La première partie est une re-narration détaillée de la façon dont la figure de Grégoire Palamas est venue à occuper une position aussi importante et contestée dans la théologie contemporaine. La deuxième partie est une réévaluation des questions centrales au cœur de la controverse autour de Palamas. Russell espère que, lorsque les constructions idéologiques du XXe siècle seront mises de côté, Palamas pourra être étudié selon ses propres termes. Préférant une métaphore musicale plutôt qu'une architecture, Russell pense que Palamas - contextualisé et reçu avec précision - pourrait enrichir le récit théologique occidental standard de la communion humaine avec le Dieu trinitaire, ajoutant ainsi "une voix indépendante riche à l'homophonie jusque-là dominante de la tradition occidentale" (p. 17). Compte tenu de la fermeté avec laquelle Russell décrit la controverse autour de Palamas comme étant tout d'abord un débat intra-orthodoxe, il pourrait probablement y avoir un autre objectif de dissiper le brouillard polémique entourant Palamas parmi les orthodoxes eux-mêmes, ouvrant ainsi des canaux pour voir les récits spécifiquement occidentaux de la communion divine-humaine avec plus de sympathie et d'ouverture.

Russell identifie une multitude d'obstacles qui entravent la libération de Palamas de sa relative obscurité et de sa captivité polémique. Parmi ceux-ci, il y a le gros de ses écrits couplé à l'absence d'une bonne traduction de ses œu-vres dans les langues modernes (à part l'italien) ; la nature polémique de ses écrits et la personnalité acerbe qui peut émerger de sa position controversée ; et l'« étrangeté » des écrits de Palamas, ancrés comme ils le sont dans un corpus dionysiaque peu connu en Occident. De l'avis de Russell, cependant, le plus grand obstacle à une réception équitable et positive de Palamas provient d'une part de la politique identitaire orthodoxe et de la construction polémique de sa pensée dans les débats du XXe siècle entre érudits catholiques et orthodoxes d'autre part (p. 2, 212). Ce volume est la tentative de Russell de dégager le terrain de certains de ces obstacles afin que Palamas puisse être vu et reçu d'une manière nouvelle.

La première partie, intitulée "La réception historique de la théologie palamite", est *un tour de force* de la narration historique. S'appuyant sur de nombreuses études récentes de l'histoire byzantine, Russell accompagne le lecteur à travers les différentes étapes de la réception palamite. Commençant par la controverse palamite elle-même (XIVe siècle) et passant rapidement au XXe siècle, Russell décrit comment Palamas est devenu une telle figure de paratonnerre pour la controverse théologique. Il s'avère que le mouvement d'ouverture dans les temps modernes est venu d'un savant occidental, Martin Jugie, dans une série d'articles (1926-1932) dans laquelle Jugie reproche à Palamas de mal lire les Pères grecs et pour l'incohérence philosophique concernant le Dieu trinitaire.

La réponse du côté orthodoxe a été immédiate, critique et soutenue. Russell nous guide à travers une série de réponses de som-

mités orthodoxes telles que Sergei Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Dumitru Stăniloae (et bien d'autres), aboutissant à l'étude historique de Jean Meyendorff (1959). Tout en respectant les contributions de ces estimés auteurs, Russell critique soigneusement certains aspects de leur lecture de Palamas et espère ainsi dégager Palamas de la question de l'identité orthodoxe dans le monde moderne. Dans le même temps, Russell attire l'attention sur l'accueil positif de Palamas par les chercheurs occidentaux Eric Mascall et Louis Bouyer (à qui Russell consacre son étude). Il conclut la section historique en concluant que "Palamas qui émerge de ces études est une figure complexe qui ne correspond pas aux dichotomies simples énoncées par Meyendorff dans son ouvrage fondateur de 1959" (p. 129).

Avec cette nouvelle narration en place, Russell se propose de s'attaquer aux questions anciennes et extrêmement difficiles qui entourent l'héritage de Grégoire Palamas. Il identifie trois domaines à considérer. Le premier est le sujet épineux de la relation entre philosophie et théologie et la question du développement doctrinal. Comment Palamas a-t-il utilisé des concepts philosophiques dans son explication de la distinction divine essence-énergies et peut-il être considéré comme provoquant un développement organique des Pères orientaux, en particulier des Pères cappadociens ? Russell montre que Palamas connaissait mieux la tradition philosophique classique que ce qui était souvent autorisé, mais qu'il opérait dans un climat monastique plus hostile à la sagesse de la philosophie païenne que dans la tradition scolaire occidentale (p. 141). Russell conclut que, à l'époque de Palamas, «la théologie et la philosophie étaient plus complètement séparées à l'Est qu'à l'Occident ». Il permet une sorte de développement de la communion divine-humaine à Palamas, mais ce « développement » n'était que l'élaboration de ce qui était déjà implicite et dans les Apôtres

(p. 161). Bien qu'il y ait une différence claire de ton et d'approche à Palamas par rapport aux scolastiques en Occident, comme le montre Russell, cette posture globale est cohérente avec une approche occidentale telle que celle trouvée par exemple à Aquinas, à la fois en termes de rôle limité de la philosophie. et pour une compréhension du développement.

La deuxième grande question concerne la manière de comprendre une compréhension participative de la communion divine-humaine. Russell dévoile la compréhension finement nuancée de Palamas du concept de participation, tiré directement des écrits de Denys. La conviction centrale dionysiaque est qu'en Dieu il y a quelque chose qui est participable et quelque chose qui est impartial. La distinction entre les énergies et l'essence décrit cette distinction : les énergies se réfèrent à Dieu se faisant participer par la créature, tandis que l'essence se réfère à Dieu comme inconnaissable et imparticipable (p. 165 ff). Le problème avec cette distinction est qu'il semble que Palamas a introduit une véritable division au sein de la Divinité, une divinité inférieure et supérieure pour ainsi dire.

Russell dégage effectivement Palamas de l'accusation de poser une « divinité inférieure » en Dieu, mais des questions demeurent. Comment la distinction entre l'essence et les énergies doit-elle s'intégrer à la trinité des personnes (*hypostases*) ? Cette distinction poussent-t-elle efficacement les distinctions hypostatiques à l'arrière-plan et introduit-elle une nouvelle distinction (ou division) en Dieu ? Crucialement, Palamas pose-t-il une véritable distinction (ontologique) en Dieu entre son essence et ses énergies (ce que croit Meyendorff) ou Palamas fait-il simplement une distinction conceptuelle (épistémologique) entre deux aspects d'un seul Dieu ? En fin de compte, Russell croit que Palamas ne propose pas une distinction ontologique en Dieu, mais qu'il voit la distinction essence-énergies

comme plus que simplement théorique (dans l'esprit). Russell appelle cela une distinction « modale » en Dieu, en vertu de laquelle Dieu se rend disponible dans ses énergies selon une modalité distincte (p. 183, 234).

La dernière question que Russell poursuit est celle de la communion divine-humaine. Comme Thomas d'Aquin, "il fait la distinction entre la grâce incréée et la grâce créée, la première étant le don du don [...] et la seconde le don tel qu'il a été reçu [...]" (p. 190). It becomes clear, however, that Palamas is largely occupied with uncreated grace (the divine energies), while Aquinas gives greater attention to grace as the created effect in the human soul. Russell explique minutieusement ce que Grégoire entend par grâce incréée, la vision de la lumière divine de Tabor, et comment la distinction essence-énergies fournit un moyen d'exprimer, tout cela d'une manière qui garde et garantit la transcendance divine tout en permettant une véritable communion divine-humaine. Russell résume la compréhension palamite de l'expérience de la communion divine-humaine comme suit : " La théose est la consommation de la grâce en action. Car nous ne sommes déifiés ni par un intermédiaire créé, ni par nos réalisations morales, ni par un processus d'abstraction intellectuelle, mais par Dieu lui-même au cours de notre vie ecclésiale" (p. 208). Ce résumé, il faut le dire, pourrait tout aussi bien être utilisé pour résumer une compréhension *occidentale* de la théose.

Je poserais deux questions à ce récit richement élaboré de l'histoire et de la doctrine palamites que Russell présente. Le premier concerne la position « intermédiaire » proposée par Russell sur le statut de la distinction énergie-essence. Probablement la critique dominante de la doctrine palamite - soulevée à la fois par les savants occidentaux et certains savants orientaux - est la division qu'elle semble ouvrir en Dieu en posant une différence « réelle » entre l'essence de Dieu et ses énergies.

Russell soutient que Palamas n'entend pas par là une distinction «ontologique» en Dieu, mais il n'est pas non plus satisfait d'une distinction simplement «théorique» au niveau de l'épistémologie. Au lieu de cela, Russell suggère que la distinction entre l'essence et les énergies de Dieu est «réelle» mais modale plutôt qu'ontologique (p. 234). Les énergies sont donc un «mode» de la présence de Dieu - Dieu lui-même - qui permet la participation humaine en Dieu tout en préservant la transcendance divine. Pour traverser ce fourré métaphysique, Russell salue la catégorie scolastique médiévale (occidentale) - fondée en fait sur la pensée de Duns Scot - d'une *distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re* (une distinction de la raison avec un fondement dans la chose). Il est clair qu'un compte rendu de la distinction essence-énergie qui est soit ontologique soit simplement théorique ne pourrait pas fonctionner comme le pont que Russell espère que Palamas pourra devenir: le premier ne serait pas acceptable pour l'Occident tandis que le second ne serait pas acceptable pour le Est. Y a-t-il un moyen de progresser dans cette impasse en posant une présence «modale» de Dieu dans ses «énergies» qui est «réelle» en termes de véritable participation humaine en Dieu? La proposition de Russell est prometteuse mais doit encore être développée. Ma deuxième question concerne la compréhension de la « participation » au jeu dans le récit dionysiaque-palamite. À plusieurs reprises, Russell montre que pour Denys (et pour Palamas), la participation à l'essence de Dieu reviendrait à brouiller la distinction entre Dieu et sa création et rendrait donc la créature indiscernable de Dieu (p. 165, 167). Pourtant, si tel est le cas, si la participation à l'essence de Dieu signifierait un flou du divin et de l'humain, alors il s'ensuit que la participation aux énergies de Dieu ferait de même. Si les énergies divines sont vraiment incréées, si elles sont Dieu lui-même dans une modal-

ité spéciale, alors y participer impliquerait également que la créature devienne ce à quoi elle participe, c'est-à-dire les énergies incréées de Dieu - clairement un résultat inacceptable pour tous . Mais c'est ce qu'implique la vision dionysiaque de la participation.

Dans ses réflexions finales, Russell admet que «par sa distinction entre l'essence divine et les énergies [Palamas] tente de résoudre un problème que les théologiens occidentaux n'ont tout simplement pas» (238). Nous pourrions ajouter que Palamas cherche à résoudre un problème que beaucoup de grands pères orientaux n'avaient pas non plus (par exemple, Athanase et Cyrille) - ce n'est pas sim-

plement une dichotomie Est-Ouest. Si, comme Russell l'espère, Palamas doit devenir une voix qui peut enrichir la théologie occidentale, cela ne peut se produire en tentant de résoudre un problème que l'Occident ne reconnaît pas facilement. Cela se produira quand il sera démontré que Palamas enrichit le récit biblique et patristique de la communion divine-humaine (théose) d'une manière qui non seulement protège les vérités chéries (comme l'unité divine), mais qui approfondit également notre compréhension et notre expérience du Dieu trinitaire.

Spyros P. Panagopoulos

Isabella Schwaderer, *Platonisches Erbe, Byzanz, Orthodoxie und die Modernisierung Griechenlands: Schwerpunkte des kulturphilosophischen Werkes von Stelios Ramfos*, Berlin: Peter Lang [Erfurter Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Orthodoxen Christentums 15] 2018, 314 pp.

The Modern Greek philosopher Stelios Ramfos (1939) has a far-reaching reputation in Greek audience. For example, his recent interviews due to the Coronavirus crisis testify to this. This is not the case outside Greek borders though. Although there exist some translations of works of his in English, as well as in other languages, he remains a more obscure figure than two other important Modern Greek intellectuals: Christos Yannaras and Metropolitan John Zizioulas. An impressive trait of Ramfos is his deep and wide knowledge of the Greek-Eastern tradition from antiquity up to our age, and its various dialogues with Western culture. This is one of the characteristics that Dr Isabella Schwaderer's rich and impressive study brings out. In her book, which is to my knowledge the first monograph on Ramfos in any language (based on her PhD at Erfurt University, 2014, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. V. Makrides), it is really remarkable how she has been able to crit-

ically follow and continue upon many of the discussions in Ramfos' voluminous oeuvre.

There was an additional difficulty in Schwaderer's enterprise. Ramfos is a thinker with various phases in the development of his thought, where the one can even contradict the other, so that, as with Heidegger (or Wittgenstein), she aptly speaks of a "Kehre" (turn). Although Ramfos in (and before) the beginning of his career was a Marxist, he went on to a critical engagement with this current via and due to a recognition of the Orthodox Christian tradition's importance, which he saw in continuity with the antecedents of ancient Greek philosophy, especially Plato(nism). This trend characterizes the so-called Neo-Orthodox phase of his thought. However, after the mid-90's, resulting in a publication in the turn to the new Millennium (*Yearning for the One*, tr. into English by N. Russell), Ramfos seemed to have completely changed his mind: for instance,

his evaluation of Western culture became increasingly positive.

Schwaderer succeeds not only in giving a synoptic view of Ramfos' intellectual development (even on single topics), but also in bringing forth the threads that unite Ramfos' periods before and after his *Kehre*. These are: a philosophical quest for the authentic Ego, an East-West comparison, the continuity of ancient Greek philosophy with European culture (whether in West or East, depending on Ramfos' phase), an endeavour to describe the quintessence of Modern Greek culture, as well as a tendency to ideologize (i.e. interpret his material through the lens of his current ideological orientation, that is anti- or pro-Western).

The book consists of seven chapters preceded by Preface (5) and concluded by an extensive list of Bibliography (279-311). In the introductory Ch.1 (11-42) she acquaints the reader with Ramfos' output and offers the essentials of her and his approach. Ch.2 (43-66) draws the context out of which Ramfos' thought springs, i.e. the multifarious relations between Western Europe/Latin Christendom and Greece/Eastern Christendom. In Ch.3 (67-116) she begins with the close reading of Ramfos' analyses, starting with his interpretation of Plato (and Plotinus), mostly drawing on his first (Neo-Orthodox) phase. A characteristic of this is the application of Eastern Patristic principles in the approach to Plato, although to my mind there is still the question: how does Ramfos' analysis in this respect essentially differ from a (pagan) Neoplatonic reading of Plato? Ch.4 (117-181) moves to the mystical tradition of the Eastern Church, especially Ramfos' reading of Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas, with Schwaderer marking the different evaluations in his various phases.

Ch.5 (183-221) is the most exciting, since Schwaderer touches on the thorny debate between the philosophical-theological categories of person (defined by relation) and individual, ending with Ramfos' own proposal on the basis of Leontius of Byzantium's view of "enhypostaton". This discussion falls under the scope of Ramfos' second phase, although this is ambiguous, too: in his *Yearning for the One* (2000) it is made clear that Leontius was speaking in Christological context, whereas in *The Jesus Secret* (2006) Ramfos does not seem to believe (any more) in Christ's divinity. Regarding the discussion initiated by Ramfos' proposal the reader can also turn to the journal *Διαβάζω* 439:4 (2003), 69-111 (as well as V. Xydias' contribution in *Antifono*: https://antifono.gr/περί-ράμφου/). Ch.6 (223-271) is devoted to aspects of Greece's (failed) meeting with Modernity in the context of linguistics (language question), literature (Papadiamantis) and sociology (or "ethnopsychology": on the occasion of the financial crisis and its roots). Ch.7 (273-278) is a Synopsis.

Overall, this book shows vividly Ramfos' preoccupation with Modern Greek identity as a journey in search for his own identity. Despite his recantations though, his mentality seems unchanged: leaning to extremes. Perhaps this is (or was) known to him, when in an interview with G. Karabelias (in journal *Άρδην* 18, 2012: https://ardin-rixi.gr/archives/13508) Ramfos said that he is looking forward to a third phase of "synthesis". Of course, this way is already taken by other intellectuals, such as Fr. Nicholas Loudovikos (with whom Schwaderer does not really engage). That said, Ramfos' approaches, even as opportunities to oppose them, are valuable, while particular remarks and readings of his are sharp and penetrating. Whether one agrees or not with his theses, his voice can be inspiring. Schwaderer's highly commendable book fosters the presuppositions for a fruitful and critical engagement with Ramfos' work, beneficial both for the study of Modern Greek and Western culture in general.

Dimitrios A. Vasilakis

Philotheos (**Φιλόθεος**) is an international scholarly journal that provides a forum for a dialogue in philosophy and in theology respectively, with a special focus on the dialogue between the two. Founded in 2001, it brings together articles and book reviews of philosophical and theological interest in the broader Christian tradition. Contributions are published in several European languages and they cover diverse field of inquiry from antiquity to the present. The overarching goal is to overcome the disciplinarian entrenchments in philosophy and theology and reintegrate professional questions with the need to answer to problems placed before us by life itself.